

Building on Biblical Foundations

“The Folly of Impatience”

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Genesis 16

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We continue our story in Genesis Chapter 16

SLIDES: Genesis 15:1-21

Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar;² so she said to Abram, “The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.”

Abram agreed to what Sarai said.³ So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife.⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me.”

⁶“Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

⁷The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur.⁸ And he said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

“I’m running away from my mistress Sarai,” she answered.

⁹Then the angel of the LORD told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.”¹⁰ The angel added, “I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.”

¹¹ The angel of the LORD also said to her:

“You are now pregnant
and you will give birth to a son.
You shall name him Ishmael,^[a]
for the LORD has heard of your misery.
¹² He will be a wild donkey of a man;
his hand will be against everyone
and everyone’s hand against him,
and he will live in hostility
toward^[b] all his brothers.”

¹³ She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen^[c] the One who sees me.” ¹⁴ That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi^[d]; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

Last week we learned about Covenant and how the Lord kept his promise to send us the Holy Spirit. The Lord is faithful. He patiently waits for the perfection of time and circumstance to perform his Will. Humans can be quite the opposite. I for one have certainly had my share of patience challenges. When I was a child I had one speed...Fast. I couldn't keep myself still. My brain was in motion, my body was in motion. I would fall off the chair every night at dinner. I could hardly contain myself enough to sit on a chair.

Patience. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Some are born with more than others. Just like courage, or wisdom. But we can all increase our patience. . .it just takes time and willingness. I believe that patience requires us to slow down mentally. Pause, breathe. We can help ourselves along but forcing ourselves to learn something difficult. Growing something that is slow growing. Delaying gratification.

Often when the Lord gives us a word, we tend to look for it. We try to rush it along. Is this it? Is that it? Maybe I did not hear him correctly? Maybe I need to do something to help it along?

The Lord told Abram he would make him a great nation. But WHEN? Maybe he meant through his seed but not Sarai's. . . that's at least what Sarai thought.

She devises a plan and everyone suffers.

As often happens when we force God's timing.

Let's look at each one:

Abram ... wife angry, God not happy, unrest in his home,
Sarai ... feeling contempt for Hagar, marriage bed defiled
Hagar... forced to have relations with her employer, bears child, must live with angry mistress,
Ishmael... born to less than ideal family arrangements, grows up to be at odds with his brother... and the Tribe of Israel.
Issac.... Has a family with dischord, older half brother with animosity toward him,

God made a promise. He was faithful to keep it. He does not require any assistance from humans.

To pull an Ishmael means to force some thing that God has not brought. Whether the timing is wrong, the place is wrong, the people are wrong.... We do it more often than we would like to think.

In the Bible we meet every kind of person – and we can easily find ourselves in their stories.

How do we avoid creating our own Ishmael's?

Patience. We wait for it.

How long? Until God brings it.

When the time is right, I, the Lord, will make it happen. Isaiah 60:22

If we force it, there will be consequences to bear.

What is folly?

Noun

1. Lack of good sense, understanding, or foresight.
“an act of folly”
2. An act or instance of foolishness.
“He regretted the follies of his youth.”
3. A costly undertaking having an absurd or ruinous outcome.

Proverbs 14:8

The wisdom of the prudent [is] to understand his way: but the folly of fools [is] deceit.

Ecclesiastes 2:3

Then I saw that wisdom excels over folly, as far as light excels over darkness.

But we have a choice. . . we can choose wisdom. . . we can choose to wait on the Lord. . .

Isaiah 40:31

In Isaiah 40:31, it is written, “But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint” (NKJV).

When we wait upon the Lord we grow in patience. We learn to be yielded. We trust HIM to renew our strength, to provide for our needs, to protect us, deliver us. It is an act of surrender. Ultimately it says – I believe you Lord. I will trust not only your promise but also in your timing.

Why should we trust the Lord? His words reassures us that He has a plan for us. . . a good one. Even when it seems so far away.

Jeremiah 29:11

11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

I needed this message today. We all grow weary in doing good. We all grow impatient at the process. But God is faithful. His word is reliable.

Jesus said all of heaven and earth would fade away but never the Word of God. It is eternal.

We will see all the trouble Aram suffers because of this one impatient choice.

But the Lord still delivers his promise – even after Abram’s compromised attempt to produce the heir.

The Lord did not abandon Abram to his folly, neither will he abandon us.

As often as we turn back to him, he extends his mercy to us. He continues with his plan for our lives. We CANNOT wreck God’s plan. He will bring his plan, in his time.

Of that we can rely.

Let us Pray. . .