



Series: Beyond Babel - week 6

Sermon Title: Avoiding Pain

Date: 7/28/2024

In Genesis 16, we will see how God has promised Abram and Sarai a son, but their own solution causes great pain.

Big Idea: Wait On God; Even When It Is Difficult

1. Wait On God And Avoid Sinful Solutions:

Genesis 16:1-16

In their day, if a couple was infertile and had no heir – the accepted solutions were adoption, taking a concubine as a substitute wife, sleeping with your wife’s female servant, or passing on your inheritance to your chief servant.

It seems Sarai believed it was up to her to provide a human solution. Sarah proposed what was a common occurrence in her time: a wife could legally give her servant to her husband as a wife. This would allow a husband to secure an heir, who would 1) continue the lineage of the husband’s family and 2) inherit the family’s fortune.

The best option in a dilemma is to wait and search the Bible to be sure the decisions you are making don’t go against God’s counsel. Too often, we search for loopholes to approve a solution rather than wait on God.

2. Wait On God And Avoid Negative Outcomes

Genesis 16:3-6

Sinful solutions lead to negative Outcomes: Abram now has two legal wives. One wife is unable to have children on her own, and the other wife is pregnant. But as is human nature, greed, envy, and hostility set in. Hagar begins to despise Sarai.

Separately, Sarai blames Abram for her wounding; Abram seems to avoid conflict by releasing the fury on Sarai and putting it back on Hagar.

What do we learn? 2 Truths:

1) Blaming others for my own sinful decision doesn’t help anything.

Confession and forgiveness in Jesus is the only solution.

2) Our Sinful actions often turn to anger and hatred for other people. When working through the outcomes of a sinful decision, many people instinctively build anger and hatred towards those involved.

3. Wait On God And See God's Promises Unfold

Genesis 16:6-16

Hagar, when being mistreated, takes the only action she can and flees. But in this instance, the Lord has a different plan for her. God tells Hagar to go back because Isaac, the promised son, is not yet born, IS the son of promise, through whom our savior Jesus will eventually come.

Ishmael is the one God speaks into the future, as a lineage of struggle and strife against and among the children of the promise. Now, this is another prophecy of God we can trace to today: Ishmael is the one to whom the Muslims point back as their primary ancestor.

The strife in the Middle East in our lifetime begins here; one son promised the land of promise, and the other made a great nation without the promise of land. Genesis 16:12

Also, notice that in Hagar and Ishmael, God provides them to prove that He hears us in our pain and even in our sinfulness. Galatians 4:23

Remember, God hears you when you cry out to him to save you from your sins. You can run, but God will always see you. Run towards him instead of away.

If you are born again through Jesus – you are born into the family of blessing, not slavery to the sin of this world.

Other important lessons from Hagar and Sarai:

Progressive:

Wait on God's Timing (how)

- 1- Choose to be content. It is the way to peace
- 2- Believe in His Word as your guide
- 3- Always be compassionate – Sarah and Hagar were not; life is complex; ... people are more so
- 4- you have no permission to mistreat someone else
- 5- Talk to Father about your waiting often
- 6- Live the life God has given you. (#1)
- 7- Trust that God's plan is perfect

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **What are some common sinful solutions people use today?**
- **Is it easy or difficult for you to wait? Explain why or why not.**
- **How do you know when to wait for God to move versus when to establish a plan on your own?**
- **Describe a time when you were tempted to act, but you chose to wait for God to act, and you saw His promise unfold**