

Connect Group Discussion Guide – 2/5/2023

Genesis 16, 17, 21 Hagar and Ishmael

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQvR0S5fB8AzraGYts4eQfg> (Note Sunday's message usually is posted on Monday.)

Audio Only: On Spotify or Apple Podcasts: Connection Point Podcast

Opening question: Have you ever felt that God was not blessing you, but blessing everyone around you. Describe what it was like. How did you respond to God?

Highlights

- Genesis 16:1-2: Sarai felt that God had kept her from becoming pregnant
 - In her eyes this was not God's plan, so she took control of the situation
 - She and Abram basically said, "here's the new plan, God." She (we) saw what we think is good and took it.
 - **Have you ever told God His plan isn't working and you have a better one?**
- Genesis 16:5 Hagar began to despise Sarai
 - Each day Hagar draws closer to delivery, Sarai is tormented
 - Sarai blamed Abram (Garden)
 - **Blame is ugly**
 - What if we spent less time blaming others and took more responsibility for yourself. **What does that look like in your life?**
- Genesis 16:6 Sarai mistreated Hagar means she abused her to the point Hagar fears for her life.
 - Hagar decided wandering in the desert was better than dealing with Sarai
- Genesis 16:7-8 God asks Hagar, where have you come from and where are you going?
 - **How would you answer this question?**
- Genesis 16:13, Hagar says, You are the God who sees me. El Roi.
 - **How do you know God sees you?**
- Genesis 17:1-2, God tells Abram we're going to solidify the covenant we've been talking about
- Genesis 17:8-9 Sign of the covenant is circumcision – a reminder of where the blessing comes from/who gives the blessing
 - A flesh sacrifice (like the animal skins in the Garden)
 - Irony – flesh is cut from the part of the body where men can be fruitful and multiply, which is part of the covenant
 - God renames Abram (exalted father) Abraham (father of many)
 - God renames Sarai (princess) Sarah (noble woman)
 - **Has God ever "renamed" you after you've had an encounter with Him?**
- Genesis 17:16-18
 - God tells Abraham, Sarah is going to get pregnant and have the son through whom I will bless all people.
 - Abraham laughs and tells God again His plan isn't working, can't you just use Ishmael
- Genesis 17:19-20 God promises to take care of Ishmael but the covenant will be fulfilled through Isaac
- Genesis 21:10-11 After Isaac is born, they're having a party for him and Ishmael laughs (mocks or makes fun of) Isaac. So Sarah told Abraham to get rid of him
- Genesis 21:14, Abraham gives Hagar a bit of food and some water and sends her out into the desert.
 - Genesis 21:18, the Lord meets her again!!

What do we learn about God and ourselves in through this part of Abraham's story?

- We are all broken people and the LORD is with hurting and broken people.
 - God doesn't leave us because we're too messy
 - God is El Roi. God sees YOU...even the ugly...and chooses to stay with you.
- God want us to move from a relationship full of blame to a relationship of accountability.
- God's covenant requires obedience and sacrifice
 - Circumcision of the heart (Romans 2)
 - **What does circumcision of the heart mean?**

The Bottom Line

- **Where have you come from and where are you going?**

Prayer