



# Sermon Highlights

## **Walking by Faith: The Promise of Isaac and the Separation of Flesh from Spirit**

### **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores Genesis 21:1-21, examining God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promise to Abraham and Sarah through the birth of Isaac, and the subsequent dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael. The passage serves as an allegory for the Christian life, illustrating the ongoing battle between walking by faith in the Spirit versus living according to the flesh. Preacher Bruce Gordon emphasizes that God always keeps His promises, though sometimes with delays according to His divine timetable. The sermon challenges believers to separate themselves from their old nature and walk in faithful obedience to God's Word, while also highlighting God's mercy even toward those who represent the flesh, as seen in His provision for Hagar and Ishmael. The message concludes with a sobering reminder that everyone has a "set time" appointed for death and must be spiritually prepared.

### **Key Points:**

- God always fulfills His promises, though His timing may differ from our expectations
- God works according to set times in His divine plan, including individual appointments with eternity
- The story of Isaac and Ishmael serves as an allegory for the conflict between the spiritual life and the fleshly life
- Walking by faith requires deliberate separation from the old sinful nature
- Living spiritually is not automatic but requires discipline, commitment, and saturation in God's Word
- The flesh is always jealous of and opposed to the spiritual life
- Victory over sin requires putting off the old man and putting on the new man
- God remains faithful and merciful even to those who represent the flesh, as demonstrated with Hagar and Ishmael
- Understanding the Old Testament is essential for comprehending the New Testament
- Now is the time to prepare for the appointed time of death and judgment

- The Christian life is characterized by ongoing spiritual warfare requiring faith and obedience

### **Scripture Reference:**

- Genesis 21:1-21 (primary passage)
- Galatians 4 (referenced as providing the allegorical interpretation)
- Habakkuk 3 (the just shall live by faith)
- Ephesians (in the fullness of time, Christ came)
- Hebrews 10 (appointed unto man once to die)

### **Stories:**

- The birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah in their old age (100 and 90 years old respectively)
- Sarah's initial laughter of disbelief when told she would have a child
- The weaning celebration of Isaac at approximately 2-3 years old
- Ishmael mocking Isaac during the celebration, leading to Sarah's demand for their removal
- Abraham's struggle with sending away Hagar and Ishmael, whom he loved
- God's instruction to Abraham to listen to Sarah and send them away
- Hagar and Ishmael getting lost in the wilderness of Beersheba and running out of water
- Hagar placing Ishmael under a shrub and sitting at a distance, not wanting to watch him die
- The angel of God hearing Ishmael's prayer and revealing a well of water to save them
- God's promise that Ishmael would become a great nation, resulting in 12 sons and the Arab nations
- The ongoing conflict between Isaac's descendants (Israel) and Ishmael's descendants (Arabs) as a continuing illustration of flesh versus spirit