

Discussion October 17 and 18:

1. Read Genesis 21.8-21 and Genesis 22.

Re-read our definition for Grace:

Grace can be seen as God's movement towards the sinner-saint; action that manifests as unmerited kindness towards the sinner-saint.

(\*Remember\* Kindness plays out more specifically than favor; kindness is specific blessings pertaining to the individual and the specific season they're in.)

Keeping this definition in mind, are you seeing any instances of Grace that you hadn't seen before?

2. Re-read our definition for Faith:

Trust and dependency on Another; without any reliance on self or human efforts or works.

(\*Remember\* Faith is the sinner's response; the sinner comes in filthy rags, empty-handed knowing they have nothing they can give to God.)

Keeping this definition in mind, are you seeing any instances of Faith in Genesis 21.8-21 and 22 that you hadn't seen before?

3. Write Genesis 16.12 here:

Who is this in reference to?

Read Genesis 21.9 in NIV or KJV; what is Ishmael doing to Isaac?

How does Genesis 21.9 relate to Genesis 16.12?

4. Because of Ishmael's behavior towards Isaac, what does Sarah recommend in Genesis 21.10? Do you think Sarah was correct in instructing this?

What is Abraham's initial response to this in Genesis 21.11? How does God intervene in Genesis 21.12?

Why do you think God wants Ishmael sent away?

5. Re-read Genesis 12.5, 12.16, 12.20, 13.2-6, and 20.14-16. Describe Abraham's wealth.

Write Genesis 21.14 here:

Despite Abraham's immense wealth, he sends Hagar and Ishmael away with very little. Given what follows in Genesis 21.15-21, why do you think it was ordained for Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away with so little?

6. What trials has Abraham had up to this point?

How do these trials equip Abraham for what is asked of him in Genesis 22?

Have your past trials ever gone on to help you in future difficult seasons?

7. Write Genesis 22.1 here:

God calls Abraham by his name which means “*father of a multitude*.” Why do you think God is reminding Abraham of the meaning of his name prior to the request in Genesis 22.2?

8. What does Isaac ask his father in Genesis 22.7?

How does Abraham respond in Genesis 22.8?

What happens in Genesis 22.9-13?

How do you think this impacted Isaac's faith?

If you have children or grandchildren (or any influence on the next generation of Believers), how do you help them develop their own faith rather than leaning on your faith?

9. Incorporate Psalm 119.132 into your prayer time this week:

*Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name.*

October 17 and 18, 2023: God's Grace to Hagar & Ishmael and Abraham & Isaac

I. Recap of Events:

A. Abram acquired Hagar as part of the Egyptian settlement:

Genesis 12.16:

*And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.*

Genesis 12.20:

*And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.*

Abram's tendency: Turn to the work of his own hands rather than trusting that God will provide for him.

B. Abram conceives Ishmael with Hagar:

Genesis 16.3-4:

*3 So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. 4 And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.*

C. Tension arises between Hagar and Sarai and Hagar flees:

Genesis 16.5-6:

*5 And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" 6 But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power: do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.*

D. Hagar meets the preincarnate Christ in the Wilderness and is reassured about the child she is carrying:

Genesis 16.10-12:

*10 The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." 11 And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael,*

because the Lord has listened to your affliction.

**12**

He shall be a wild donkey of a man,  
his hand against everyone  
and everyone's hand against him,  
and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.”

Hagar obeys and returns to Abram and Sarai; she delivers Ishmael and the boy grows and ages.

**21.1** *The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. 2 And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. 3 Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. 4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.” 7 And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”*

i. God fulfills His promise to Abraham and Sarah; the promise to bless them with offspring was based on no merit of their own so nothing they did compromised this promise.

ii. As commanded, the parents name him Isaac, which means laughter.

iii. Abraham is quick to follow-through on the command to circumcise him at 8 days old.

**21.8** *And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. 9 But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. 10 So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.” 11 And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. 12 But God said to Abraham, “Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named. 13 And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring.”*

i. The most reliable Jewish texts place the age of weaning between 3 and 5, and to celebrate this milestone, we're told that Abraham prepared a great feast.

This feast is meant to commemorate God's faithfulness in providing that long-awaited son and for delivering Isaac through the perilous infant and toddler years.

ii. Ishmael is "*laughing*" at—some translations say "*mocking*" Isaac. The idea is mocking in a sense of making sport of someone...literally making a toy out of them and getting your merriment by scorning them.

The Lord draws near to Abraham and tells him of His will in the matter: Do as Sarah says; and even though Isaac is the established offspring, Ishmael will still be blessed.

Galatians 5.24:

*And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

iii. Sending Ishmael away was also Grace to Isaac. Only 2 outcomes are possible for this scenario continuing for any extended period of time:

- Ishmael could have harmed Isaac in some way, or
- Ishmael could have corrupted Isaac in some way

iv. God in His Grace uses Sarah and her reaction to do multiple things. Here God is:

- Continuing to crucify Abraham's flesh
- Extending Grace to Isaac
- Extending Grace to Hagar
- Extending common Grace to Ishmael

**21.14** *So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. 15* *When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. 16* *Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, "Let me not look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. 17* *And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. 18* *Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation." 19* *Then God opened her eyes, and*

she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. **20** And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. **21** He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

- i. Abraham is quite wealthy, yet he sends Hagar and Ishmael away with only bread and water. God would have Hagar and Ishmael sent away with very little so they would end up in circumstances that would require His divine intervention.
- ii. Ishmael is physically distressed to the point of death. Hagar is reduced to tears as she preemptively grieves the death of her son.

Genesis 16.10-12:

**10** The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." **11** And the angel of the Lord said to her,

*"Behold, you are pregnant  
and shall bear a son.*

*You shall call his name Ishmael,  
because the Lord has listened to your affliction.*

**12**

*He shall be a wild donkey of a man,  
his hand against everyone  
and everyone's hand against him,  
and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.*

The Lord soothes Hagar's fear and then He kindly reassures her of His promise to her concerning Ishmael: that he will be made into a great nation.

- iii. To save Ishmael, God directs Hagar's attention to a well.

**22.1** After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." **2** He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

- i. The word for test means "prove." And when we are tested it is to prove our Faith not only to ourselves but to those around us.

Genesis 11.31-32:



**31** Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. **32** The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

What will he do now that his faith is sturdier? That's what the Lord wants to reveal.

ii. Abraham responds with “*Here I am.*” He has beheld the Grace of God. He has reveled in the Grace of God. So he is quick to respond to His Gracious God.

iii. The Lord had pulled Abraham and his barren wife out of a godless people and promised to give them the blessing of a son. Abraham's relationship with the Lord was very much developed through this promise, but now it was time to reveal if Abraham loved God or loved God because of this promise and the fulfillment of that promise.

iv. Abraham is to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. The Hebrew word for burnt offering is ‘*olah*’ and it literally means to “*go up.*” And later on in Lev. we're told that the smoke from a burnt offering is “*a soothing aroma to the Lord.*”

Leviticus 1.9:

*But its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.*

Abraham had to trust God, not just the promises that God made him.

**22.3** *So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. 7 And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” 8 Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together. 9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son*

and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. **10** Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.

i. Abraham chose faith and trust over what he was feeling.

Hebrews 4.15:

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

The Lord had already Graciously prepared Abraham to sacrifice a child, although in much less dramatic fashion.

God had commanded Abraham to give up Ishmael by sending him away.

When you look back and recognize the Lord's sovereign and good control over those times, it's easier to look forward and trust that He will do it again...that He will provide again, that He will bring good out of suffering again.

ii. *Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.* v. 5

Abraham is not thinking this is just a test, Abraham thinks this is a command and he is set to follow it through to the knife slit across Isaac's throat and the spark that starts the burning.

So even if Isaac was consumed by flame Abraham trusted that God would raise him from the dead because God would not blaspheme Himself.

Hebrews 11.17-19:

**17** *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, **18** of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." **19** He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.*

iii. Isaac is sturdy enough and strong enough to carry wood up a rugged mountainside, so he would have also been sturdy enough and strong enough to thwart his father's attempt to sacrifice him.

Gen. 22 is a paean to Abraham's faith, but we should never forget that Isaac is also demonstrating faith and trust in the Lord.

iv. Jesus wants all of us:

Luke 14.26:

*If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.*

**22.11** *But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."*

i. Abraham does indeed love God more than Isaac...but not only that—he loves God and not just the promises He makes and fulfills through Abraham's life.

ii. This ram also foreshadows another Sacrifice the Lord would Graciously provide: Jesus Christ. And so Abraham names the hill Moriah which means "God will provide."

**22.15** *And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.*

i. Abraham obeyed. A sovereign God who had a just claim on Abraham's life commanded him to do something and Abraham obeyed.

Then the Lord Graciously draws to Abraham and blesses him and places honor upon him because of his obedience.

The blessing and honor is the ratification of the promise of numerous offspring.