

## Genesis 16 – God’s Sovereign Hand of Mercy

### ❖ Pray

### ❖ Recap on Abram

- Genesis 12 – The Promises of God to Abram
- Genesis 13 – Lot and Abram Separate
- Genesis 14 – Abram goes to war against 4 kings
- Genesis 15 – God confirms His covenant promises to Abram....

### ❖ Introduction: Today we come to Genesis 16

- **Breaks down into 4 main sections (Not My Main Points)**
  - I’ll mention them as we read the text together
- **Let me say this initially:**
  - **This is not a pretty picture for Abram our father in the Faith.**
    - There is no example to be followed by Abram.
    - This is sin in its ugly form showing up in this man of God.
  - **Especially in light of how Chapter 15 ends...**
    - With God passing through the sacrifices... promising Abram blessing
    - And we see Abram believing God...
  - **Abram is known as the Father of the Jewish People...**
    - He is known as the father figure of the Christian Faith as well...
    - Yet... the Bible does not hide the fact that he had flaws
  - **God makes sure to tell the story just as it occurred...**
    - And... Abram had done many faithful things for God...
    - Yet still... God chose to include this rather unflattering moment in Abram’s life...
- **Let me say this also:**
  - **Although this chapter does not paint a pretty picture of Abram**
    - It paints a Mural of the Sovereignty and Mercy of his God
  - **The Loving Character of God is on full display within the chapter...**
    - So... although Abram does not give us much of an example...
    - **Rather: Abram serves as an example of what not to do...**
      - ◆ As I heard from one person... We can all serve as an example to others..
        - Some of us just serve as examples of what NOT to Do...
        - This was Abram...
  - **God however, serves as an example of Love, Compassion, and Mercy...**
    - **God is the Hero of this Chapter... as He always is**
    - Let’s look at Chapter 16

### ❖ 1) Sarai and Abram get impatient

- Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. <sup>2</sup>And Sarai said to Abram, “Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived
- **It has been 10 years since the promises had come to Abram and Sarai**
  - 10 years since the call of God on their life
  - 10 years since Abram trust in God

- So... Sarai tries to help God fulfill His promises...
- **Abram was a rich man...**
  - And as a rich man in that day... He had many servants...
  - One of these servants was a servant to his wife Sarai...
- **And as was lawful during this time... Sarai offered up a suggestion...**
  - That Abram be given this servant to be another wife to him
  - And this was Sarai's idea
  - **During that time... under the law that surrounded them...**
    - Which we can look at even today... A man could take a servant as his wife...
    - And the child born to him could be considered his other wife's child...
    - It was like having a Surrogate Mother...
- **And this woman was an Egyptian woman...**
  - And she was essentially their slave...
  - And it is interesting that it would be the descendants of Abraham that would one day be slaves
    - To... the Egyptians...

## ❖ 2) Sarai Doesn't like this plan anymore...

- **And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. <sup>5</sup> 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!" <sup>6</sup> 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**
- **Hagar immediately gets pregnant... And she gets a little prideful...**
  - And I assume it was because children were seen as a blessing from the Lord.
  - And Sarai so far had not been blessed in this manner...
  - Yet God saw it good to bless Hagar...
- **So Sarai gets really mad...**
  - **And She blames Abram! For her Idea!!!**
  - **What? She says its his fault...**
    - **What an odd turn of Events!**
    - **Men... How could this be? Can you ever imagine this situation happening to you?**
    - **Your wife being mad at you for going along with her plan?**
    - **May it Never be! This is unheard of in our day...**
  - **Now... I am just telling the story as it happened... don't blame the messenger...**
    - **I am making no points as to who is right or wrong here....**
- **So Abram... as the leader of his household...**
  - Continues to show his great leadership qualities...
  - And he says... Yes Wife! You do with Hagar as you please...
  - So Sarai dealt harshly with her... And Abram allowed it...
- **I will say this:**
  - **To all of you out there that have struggles in your marriages...**
  - **And you look around you and think... so and so has such a strong marriage...**
  - **They probably never struggle...**
  - **WRONG!!!**
    - **Just look at our great father in the faith Abram...**
    - **And we see very clearly.... Disharmony within the marriage...**
    - **What a relief to know we are not alone!**

### ❖ 3) God comes to Hagar

- <sup>7</sup>The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.
- <sup>8</sup>And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai."
- <sup>9</sup>The angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her."
- <sup>10</sup>The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."
- <sup>11</sup>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.
- <sup>12</sup>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."
- **So God finds Hagar the servant of Abram and Sarai...**
  - And He gives her direction... He tells her to go back... and submit to Sarai
  - And He promises her that her offspring will be many...
    - **And indeed they will as Ishmael will have 12 sons...**
      - ◆ And the Arab nations would be born to Ishmael...
  - **And God gives her word concerning her son and what sort of man he will be...**

### ❖ 4) Hagar Honors God

- <sup>13</sup>So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."
- <sup>14</sup>Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.
- <sup>15</sup>And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.
- <sup>16</sup>Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.
- **So at the end of the chapter we see...**
  - She sees God for who He is... **a God who sees...**
  - And the well is named after what she called God...
- **And Hagar went back home... and she had her son...**
  - And Abram named him Ishmael... which is the name that God gave to Hagar...
  - And we see here... that Abram was 86 years old... when Ishmael was born
  - 11 years after God called him and made promises to him
- **And we also see no mention that Ishmael grew up as Sarai's Son....**

### ❖ Let's Consider two Main Themes here:

- 1) The Sinful Actions of Man
- 2) The Loving Actions of God
- **Application: These 2 main themes have such great application to us... great principles to teach us.**
  - **1) In the first... we learn important lessons on how NOT to live...**
  - We learn about mistakes... and their consequences...
    - **Example: When I was growing up... Up until about 14 years old... and getting saved...**
      - ◆ I wouldn't say I was a shining example of the right thing to do...
      - ◆ So... this led to my father giving me an attitude adjustment...
      - ◆ With a paddle named... attitude adjuster... that he made me build...
      - ◆ That paddle was actually the beginning of my wood working skills...!
      - ◆ I have always made a point within my family...
        - That I got a lot more whippings than my brother Dean...
        - And to that Dean would reply...
          - Well... You can learn a lot from your older brother's mistakes!
          - And here... we can learn a lot from their mistakes...
- **2) In the Second we learn a lot about the loving Character of God...**
  - We will make mistakes... that is inevitable...

- We were born into sin... and even after coming to know Jesus as our Lord and Savior
- We still live within a body of sin... with sinful passions...
- And it is good to see how kind God is to those people of Faith...
  - ◆ That do not always make the right decisions...

## ❖ 1) The Sinful Actions of Man (I list 7)

- 1) Sarai Becomes Impatient
- 2) Abram listens to the sinful counsel of his wife
- 3) Hagar is filled with pride
- 4) Sarai blames her husband
- 5) Sarai deals harshly with Hagar
- 6) Abram Doesn't Stop This Injustice
- 7) Hagar runs away

### ➤ This is not a pretty picture is it?

- Let's Just deal with one of these sinful actions today... And consider it's consequences
  - Let's deal with their impatience with God's plan...
    - ◆ Because this is really the main problem that the others stem from...

### ➤ 1) The Impatience in God's plan

- **What had God done for Abram and Sarai already?**
  - He had appeared to them.
  - He had given them His Word...
  - **Many times we have read so far...**
    - ◆ **And the Word of the Lord came to Abram...**
      - What a blessing that was...
- **God had promised Abram many blessings...Namely**
  - He would have a Child...
  - He would have Land...
  - His name would be made great...
  - He would be blessed while his enemies cursed
  - Through him all nations would be blessed...
- **God led him out of a life of Idol Worship...**
  - I think this gets lost in the story...
  - God could have continued to allow Abram to be blind...
  - Allowed him to continue living in a land where people worshipped many false gods...
  - Where he himself and his family worshipped idols...
- **Yet God in His mercy called Abram out of the darkness and into the light...**
  - And he led him into another land...
  - **And Along the way... as Abram was a nomad**
    - ◆ But God provided for him... God protected him... and God made him very rich...

### ➤ 1) But... They are Impatient in God's Plan...

- So Sarai tried to do things in her own way...
- **She was faced with a crisis of faith...**
  - **And instead of digging deeper into her faith... She tried to step up to do what God had promised**
  - **Sarai found a way to accomplish God's promise...**
    - ◆ In her time... and in her way... According to the flesh...
    - ◆ In the same way that Eve thought she knew better than God...
    - ◆ She thought God was holding out on her...

- ◆ She took the authority away from God and gave it to herself...
    - And she took from the tree and she Ate...
  - **Sarai finds herself doing the exact same thing...**
    - ◆ Just in different circumstances! **Sin is always repeating itself...**
    - ◆ in the same foundational ways... In different situations...
- **What a valuable lessons this is for us:**
  - Galatians 4:22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. <sup>23</sup> But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise.
    - ◆ Her plan was not the plan of God... It was the plan of Sarai
    - ◆ It was not through faith... which is waiting on God
    - ◆ It was through the flesh... trusting in self...
      - (I can not even begin to give you the multitudes of ways this can show up in your life)
- **This was a lawful action she was doing....**
  - It was lawful in the culture around her...
  - But this did not make it right in the eyes of God...
  - **Application: Just because the culture around us says YES...**
    - ◆ Just because they allow things or even condone them...
    - ◆ It does not make them right....
    - ◆ The people of God must be in this world... yet not be of this world...
- **Where is Abram in all of this?**
  - **Following along! Sarai wants to give him a new wife to have a child with....**
    - ◆ Abram says... Ok... let's do this...
  - **She gets pregnant according to the plan...**
    - ◆ Then Hagar is giving Sarai the look... You know it ladies...
      - When another ladies looks at you like they are better than you
      - Or you assume they are looking at you that way...
    - ◆ **Sarai gets mad and blames it on Abram...**
      - (Can you imagine that argument?) (Oh how the Bible prepares us for real marriage!)
  - **Abram says... she is your servant... do whatever you want...**
    - ◆ So Sarai is harsh toward her...
    - ◆ And Abram just sits idly by and lets it all happen
- **Faith is Always about Waiting Isn't it?**
  - **Alistair Begg asks the question:**
    - ◆ *"Will I allow my faith to overcome the questions of my heart? Or will I allow the questions of my heart to overcome my Faith?"*
  - **Faith is always waiting... it is waiting for God to fulfill His promises...**
    - ◆ It is following Him... although we may not know the whole plan....
- **Application: It is good to wait for the Lord:**
  - **Lamentations 3:25-26 The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. <sup>26</sup>It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.**
    - ◆ God says wait on me... Trust me... Heed my Word...
    - ◆ Don't try to get ahead of me... Don't try to go a different way...

➤ **Notice: The Consequences of Impatience**

- **Hostility... Look at what God says about Ishmael**
    - 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."
      - ◆ This man was going to be a rough dude..
  - **Hostility b/w Sarai and Hagar... Between Isaac and Ishmael...**
  - **Ultimately... the children born to Ishmael would become the Arab nations...**
    - The religion of Islam would one day come from his offspring
    - A descendent of Ishmael would one day claim that the angel Gabriel came to him
    - **And He would write the Koran... over the course of 23 years**
      - ◆ He would take parts of the accounts of Abram... but then he would veer off
      - ◆ And he would create a completely different god...
      - ◆ With a completely different character than the one true God...
  - **This is not to say... that there would not be many of his descendants that would follow God**
    - They did and still do...
  - **It is also not to say that all of the descendants of Isaac would follow God...**
    - They haven't
- **So we see impatience on the part of Sarai and Abram... And the sinful actions of man...**

## ❖ 2) The Loving Actions of God

### ➤ 1) God is Sovereign

- **Although Sarai did not seem to think God was going to fulfill His promise without her help**
  - She did see God as Sovereign...
  - The word Sovereign means that one has supreme and ultimate power...
    - ◆ And that He reigns over all things... even time and the will of man...
  - Sarai says: **And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children.**
    - ◆ She knows that it is God who has kept her from having children...
- **The Scriptures are very clear that God is Sovereign over all things...**
  - We do not have to like it... we can try to explain it away when it doesn't make sense...
  - But the truth is that God is Sovereign even over the smallest atom...
  - And Sarai at least knew that...
- **Notices what the Scriptures say about God...**
  - **Isaiah 46:9-11 "Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, <sup>9</sup> remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, <sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' <sup>11</sup> calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.**
- **But this is good news... Because God is good....**
  - He created the world good... his plans are good... His plans are for the prospering of His people
  - So if God is Sovereign... then His rule is always good...
  - **So we trust in His Sovereign Rule... even when it makes little sense...**
    - ◆ Even when we have to wait! Even as our waiting gives others the opportunity to sneer
    - ◆ To say... where is their God... Why do they continue to wait on Him to answer...
    - ◆ Even when they say... I have a child and you do not... (Think allegorically here)
    - ◆ God had a better plan for Sarai and Abram...

## ➤ 2) God Shows Mercy to Hagar

- **This reminds me of the woman at the well in John 4**
  - It also reminds me of the woman caught in adultery in John 8
- **The Angel of the Lord comes to Hagar...**
  - This angel of the Lord... this is not simply an angel...
  - Moses gives Him this name... but it is clear that this is God Himself...
  - Most would say this is Jesus before He became a man...
  - And there would be many instances of Him showing up in the Old testament...
- **How do we know it is God... and not simply an angel?**
  - Because of how Hagar responds... She says:
    - ◆ **<sup>13</sup>So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing,"**
    - ◆ Moses calls him the Lord who spoke to her...
    - ◆ She calls him a God of seeing...
- **Also notice how else she sees God**
  - She begins to know Him as One who is there for her
    - ◆ **for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."**
- **Maybe previously... as an Egyptian... she did not yet worship the God of Abram**
  - We know that Abram would set an example of worshipping the Most High God
  - And this was known by his servants... But it does not mean they knew God
  - She may have thought Abram's religion was a sham after how she was treated...
- **But Here... she knows Him... she knows him as the one who looks after her...**
  - He sought her in the desert... he found her...
  - He blesses her... He gives her direction... And He will not leave her...
  - She is just as important to God as Abram was
  - And He will show up later to watch over her

## ➤ 3) God Gives Grace to Sarai and Abram

- **In the end... God still had a plan with Sarai and Abram...**
  - He did not throw them away...
  - He did not take away His promises...
  - They were still intact...
- **The promises of God were never dependent on Abram's will**
  - They were dependent on the nature and power of God
- **Consider what John teaches us about the grace and sovereignty of God**
  - **John 1:12-13 <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**
- **Isn't It Great to Know that God is a God of Grace?**
  - Unmerited Favor... that is what Grace is... Unearned Favor from God...
  - He didn't give up on those who are His...
  - **Lamentations 3:22- The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup>they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

## ❖ Invitation:

- **How are you doing trusting God these days?**
  - Are you trying to do things your way... in the flesh... because that is what seems right?
- **How does your faith look today?**