

The Takeaways

There's a message of hope to the downtrodden in Hagar's story; God is gracious. He sees me he knows my plight.

God is also saying to us in this text, "You will always be a slave to your culture and to the identity that culture gives you until your heart is completely convinced that I love you."

What is it in our life that determines whether or not it's a worthwhile existence?

Hagar was extremely excited, but how much more excited should you be because you know something she didn't know?



Discovering Real Freedom and the God Who Listens

Genesis 16:1–14

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "The Lord has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. 3 So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.) 4 So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she's pregnant she treats me with contempt. The Lord will show who's wrong—you or me!" 6 Abram replied, "Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit." Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away. Genesis 16:1-6

I. Hagar-The Slave

"...perhaps I can build a family through her."

The point is that Hagar belongs to Sarai as property, and the ensuing complications of their relationship build on that fundamental fact.

Then Sarai said to Abram, "This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms,

Sarah is asking Abraham to intervene and he hasn't, he's remained passive towards Hagar's contempt of his wife.

Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.
The moral of the story thus far: The Bible is not a book of virtues.

What is this teaching us?

This is teaching us the very best human beings in the history of the world are moral and spiritual failures. They can't rise above their own culture, they can't rise above the brutality of their own times, and they can't escape the self-centeredness of their own hearts. Yet God continues to come to them.

The angel of the Lord found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. 8 The angel said to her, "Hagar, Sarai's servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress, Sarai," she replied.9 The angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority." Genesis 16:8,9

Now why would God tell her to go back into an abusive situation? "Because I want to bless you, and I want to make you a great nation." Genesis 16:10

What's the point: God sometimes calls people to do things that are hard, yet through faith and obedience they're on the way to some greater blessing.

II. Sarai/Sarah-The Barren

So Sarai said to Abram, "The Lord has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." Genesis 16:2

What did she want? The kid.

Do you see the irony in the narrative? Sarai is the slave too. Only her slavery is inward.

What's the point? *The point is ... What are you a slave to?*

III. Abram/Abraham-The Uncaring

So Sarai said to Abram, "The Lord has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. Genesis 16:2

These two women represent two different approaches to the blessing. **Sarah is the way of faith. Hagar is a way of works.**

Apostle Paul comments on this very thought in the NT book of Galatians 4:22,23 "Listen, you who want to save yourselves by obeying the law. For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise."

What's the point: Taking shortcuts doesn't work.

IV. The Mysterious Friend

Now why is this figure so mysterious? Two reasons. The first thing that's so mysterious about this figure is this is really unlike any other angel we've ever seen.

1. *the angel of the LORD*

2. *He speaks as if He's God* "I will give you more descendants than you can count." vs. 10

Even Hagar knows at the end of the encounter:

"You are the God who sees me." She also said, "Have I truly seen the One who sees me?" Genesis 16:13

Think about this. Hagar is an Egyptian, not a Hebrew. Hagar is a woman, not a man. A slave, not free. She's not even in the promised line God has coming 14 years later with Issac's birth. Yet God is so gracious to her.

And the angel also said, "You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means 'God hears'), for the Lord has heard your cry of distress. ...13 Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the Lord, who had spoken to her. She said, "You are the God who sees me."