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GENESIS 21:1-21

Series: Understanding Your Roots

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we love you and we're grateful just to be able to come and talk to you. We're also grateful that you designed the church, a place where we can fellowship, find friends, and relate to people across generations – young people with older people and children and so on – that we can all be a family, a family of God together and enjoy those extended relationships. We just really appreciate that. So thank you again for the privilege we have to enjoy one another. Now Lord, we have some challenges that we want to bring before you. A number of those you see them listed on Facebook here on Facebook Live. We've got people here at the Barn that are challenged in some various ways. A number of physical problems that people are experiencing. So Lord, I'm asking that you would work in the bodies of people and bring healing, bring comfort, bring strength in the midst of the challenges that they're facing. Lord, we're excited to open your word and we're grateful that you've provided it for us. Because we know that in your word you provide us with truth that we can apply to our lives right now. So as we look at this passage in Genesis 21 and Galatians 4 today, we ask that you would speak to us. Our hearts want to be open to what you have to say and we want you to change our hearts. We want to come in line with your plan for what you have for us. So Lord, use today in a special way. Use your Holy Spirit to train us, to teach us, convict us of sin, to comfort us, to encourage us. All those things that you do, we're grateful and we're grateful for our experience as we learn together corporately. In Jesus' name, amen.

Well I thank you for joining with us and being here today. We're going to look at Genesis 21 and Galatians 4. I call this two-for-one Sunday because actually there's going to be two sermons today. These two sermons are represented in the passage that we're going to look at, both in the Old Testament and then what Paul does is he takes this story from the Old Testament and he develops it in the New Testament with a different application. So it's not like I can preach the same sermon. It's like we've got a sermon going on in the Old Testament, we've got another one I'll briefly touch on as we look at the New Testament.

So if you'll open your Bibles with me to Genesis 21, we're going to go back to this story of Abraham and Sarah and Hagar. It's a continuing story. We're kind of jumping in to the middle of this. We're going to take a look at this story from different perspectives. When I say perspective, what I mean is you look at it from one angle. I don't know if you like football, but if you watch football nowadays they have this ability to take a screenshot or a shot and then they'll move the whole camera angle somehow all the way over to some other place. It's a beautiful thing they do. I love it when they do that. We're going to do that today in our passage and we're going to look

at the passage from the perspective of first Sarah and then we'll change the perspective to the other characters in this story. So let's see what God has to say to us and for us from Sarah's perspective in this story.

Genesis 21. *The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised.* Now if you remember twenty-five years earlier (that's a long time ago) God had promised to Sarah that she would have a child. At that time she was sixty-five years old and at sixty-five years of age she was it says *past the way of women*. In other words she couldn't have children anymore. She was sixty-five and God promised her a child. Now we're at the place where that promise is fulfilled. Now she's going to have this baby at ninety years old. It's just obviously a miracle baby. It's a bizarre situation. This isn't a virgin birth. This is Abraham and Sarah came together and they're going to have a baby. It's just really an amazing thing. Sarah's just going to be tickled by this in her life. We just sang a song about the evidence of God's goodness all around, that His promise is in fulfillment. That's what we see. We see the evidence of God's goodness, we see the promises fulfilled. That's what Sarah was seeing in the passage. She's just delighted. She can't believe it. We can't believe it either. This is one of those things she sees and, wow, this is so big.

Now the application I see here is there is a length of time between the giving of the promise to the receiving of the promise. In fact any of the miracles that we see in the Bible, there seems to be a space between the announcement and the miracle itself.

Take the raising of Lazarus from the dead, for example. I can imagine being a disciple on the sidelines watching this and Jesus says, "Move this stone away." And then He says, "Lazarus, come forth," and then everybody waits. How long was it? Was it one minute? Was it two minutes before? I can imagine the disciples saying, "Is He going to do it again? Is this going to be one of those miracles? What's going to happen here?" There's a period of time that exists between the promise or the beginning of the miracle and the end of the miracle. And that happens in our lives too. There's some times when we feel like we're discouraged because of that. We're discouraged because we wonder what is God doing? Can I be confident in anything that God is doing? What is He doing in my life? Sometimes there is a distinct space that exists between the presentation of the promise and the realization of it. And yes, we can be confident.

If you look at a verse in the New Testament, Philippians 1:6, Paul says this: *Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it onto completion until the day of Christ.* What he's saying here is that this is not just something that is happening right now, but God is working in our lives. You can be confident of this. Young people, you can be confident that God is at work in your life and He's going to bring it to completion. That doesn't mean that everything we wish for is going to come true.

In fact I would suggest that we enter into a danger with children and young people (parents, I just want to suggest this to you) when we kind of paint the Christian life as the yellow brick road. We do that because Jesus says things like *my peace I give to you; not like the world gives*, but this is a special peace that I give to you. So we get the peace of Jesus that He gives to us. And Jesus says in John 15 – *I want your joy to be full*. And we go yes, that's what happens when we're Christians. We get this joy that's full. Jesus talks about love and the power of love that's going to

help other people see that they're disciples. Yes, so we have love that is so great. But sometimes we paint the picture of the Christian life with love and joy and peace and blessing and so on. But we forget the passage when Jesus says *in this world you will have tribulation*. You see, we must realize that this world has struggles. Otherwise here's what happens with the young person. They know, they've been told all their life Jesus Christ provides you with blessing. Love the Lord, that's the best way to live. But then they have a problem in their life and it doesn't go away. And they're going I'm disappointed in God because I didn't get the yellow brick road experience.

The reality is we go through trials in our lives. Even as Christians we have things, we have disappointments in our heart. We have sadness that exists. We get angry sometimes with things that are going on. Things don't turn out the way we like. We will have tribulations. Things are unfair. Bad things will happen in our lives. Yet at the same time God has made these promises that we can enjoy.

Now why is there a distance of twenty-five years between the beginning of the promise and the fulfillment of the promise? Why is there a period of time between you trusting in the Lord and seeing the results of what happens? The reason is because God wants to exercise something in our lives He calls faith. That's where we learn trust. We learn to trust God in the midst of struggles. We wish they would go away right away, but sometimes we're in a painful situation because of a physical pain or because of a relational pain or an economic pain, or just disappointment in life. That's when we learn to trust God in ways that we never learned before. There's a trust period of time here.

Now Sarah's at the place in her relationship with God or in her life where she sees the results of the promise. And she is tickled by this whole thing. I hope you sometimes see God's grace happen and you're just tickled by it. You go, "I can't believe this! This is God's grace at work again!" That is such a beautiful place to be and that's exactly where Sarah is. I want you to realize that sometimes those gifts of God, those promises come and we have to wait. And in the midst of that waiting is the trust experience that we enjoy.

Let's read on in verse 2. *And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Yitzhak.* That's the name in Hebrew. It's *Isaac* is how we pronounce it in English. Yitzhak. It means laughter. It means joke or funny. That's what it means.

The reason the name Isaac is present because way back when the promise was given and Abraham was told, "You're going to have a child in your old age," Abraham laughed, probably a laugh in amazement saying this is going to be great. When Sarah heard this and she laughed, it was probably a laugh of doubt of how can this take place. But they're laughing. And now they're laughing again because it happened. They're just tickled with the promise of God. I hope you get tickled with the promise of God sometimes. You see God's grace and you go, "This is so cool. This is so fun." So they named the baby laughter, Isaac.

And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old... Moses, as he's writing this, wants to make sure we understand this guy is an old dude. He was a hundred years old *when his son Isaac was born to*

him. And Sarah said (notice what Sarah is saying now about laughter), “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.” And that’s why we named the baby laughter or Yitzhak. 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.”

Just experience this from Sarah’s perspective for a moment and just enjoy the promises of God. God has made promises to us that we can embrace, enjoy. Sometimes there’s a waiting period, but we’re tickled when we see God’s grace unveil itself in life. It’s just a really special place.

But I have to warn you that whenever we have promises, we have problems. Did you know that? “God, I’m just praying for a car, that you would give me a car.” So God gives you a car. Well you know if you have a car you’re going to have a problem with that car. That’s what happens with the fulfillment of promise. “Lord, I just pray you’d give me a wife.” And you get a wife and then you’ve got problems. I’m not saying wives are bad. I mean wives are great! But there are some times when we have problems in those relationships. Right? You pray, “Lord, give me a job. I’m really asking…” But then you have a job and you have a problem. Promises that God gives often have problems associated with them. And now we’re going to see that’s the case here.

Let’s go on in the story. Actually we’re going to look at this story now from a different perspective. Let’s leave the perspective of Sarah and her enjoyment of the promise and her delight and her laughter, and let’s go over to Abraham and look at the whole story from Abraham’s perspective. He has a baby boy that was promised. This is so great.

And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. Had a great feast. They probably didn’t wean children until they were a little older, three or four years old usually. That’s often common in third world countries now. In America we have formula, so we can wean them fast. We can wean them at birth if we want to. So yes, but usually three or four years old. Let’s imagine this little boy is three years old and is weaned. Abraham’s saying, “Yes! Finally!” Maybe it’s Sarah saying, “Finally he’s weaned!” And so now they’re celebrating the development of this child.

If you’re a parent, you understand this. Right? You go and you say, “Finally he’s out of diapers. No more Pampers in the house.” “Oh this is great. Finally he’s weaned.” “Finally he’s sleeping through the night. Oh this is so cool.” Or “finally he’s off to school during the day.” Or “finally she’s starting to read.” You know when a child learns how to read they take off with reading and it’s just great because now you don’t have to read the instructions for history anymore. Just read them yourself! So now the child can read. It’s so fun. And then you say, “He can finally drive. He can drive himself all over the place. I don’t have to be taking him to here and there and wherever else.” Or “finally she’s moved out of the house.” Those are landmarks for parents, I’ve got to tell you. As parents we celebrate those moments.

So that’s what Abraham is doing. He’s saying let’s have a party. This baby is weaned. I’m so excited about this party. He invites everybody over. It kind of reminds me of a birthday party for a one-year-old. It’s certainly not for the one-year-old. The only thing the one-year-old gets is a huge cake in front of him and he doesn’t know what to do with it, so he makes a mess out of it.

But this one of those big parties and everybody's coming out, everybody's around, and they're celebrating the fact this child is weaned. So imagine the party. The party environment that's going on.

But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing.

Okay, if you remember the story then you'll remember that Abraham and Sarah conspired together when they found out they were going to have this baby when they were old. They said, "You know what? We're going to help God out," and so Sarah gave Hagar, an Egyptian servant woman, to Abraham as a wife so they could have a baby. They figured this is how God's promise is going to take place. We'll help God out. It was a human solution for a divine promise. This wasn't God's plan.

But now we have this boy named Ishmael. He's about seventeen years old now. And what is he doing in the story here? He's laughing. This is like a laugh of a persecuting kind of laugh. This is laugh that's a teasing kind of laugh or a mockery. Now remember there's a boy who's three and a seventeen-year-old. Can a seventeen-year-old mock a three-year-old? Well if you have children, you know that that's definitely possible. That the mockery can take place and the teasing can take place. Sarah sees this and the whole problem now raises its head. We've got this fleshly solution and we've got the son of the promise. So Sarah is going to take some action.

She says 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." That's what she says to Abraham. Notice Abraham's response. We're looking at it from Abraham's viewpoint at the party. Okay? It says – *And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son.* In other words, he'd invested in this boy. He loved him. This is painful for Sarah to come and say put her away. I'm thinking in my own mind this is kind of unfair. That's what I'm thinking in my own heart. But God has something planned here because God's going to affirm Sarah. He's not going to rebuke Sarah. Notice what God does in the passage. Abraham's there, he really loves this boy and God's saying no, we're going to move this boy out of the situation. Why? Well we'll come back to that in a minute.

It says – *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 (listen to your wife – good advice, husbands), for through Isaac shall your offspring be named."*

Here's what's happening in Abraham's heart. Abraham is holding onto something in his life that's hindering his ability to enjoy the promise. That's what's taking place here. He's in love with something that's hindering his ability to enjoy the promise. We all have to come to that place in our lives where God sometimes prunes things out of our hearts, prunes things away that says this thing that you're holding onto is hindering your ability to enjoy the life that I have for you. To enjoy the promise and all the blessings associated with it you need to prune your life. You need to cut out the things that are hindering your progress.

Young people, you need to understand this. There are a lot of things you may enjoy in life, a lot of things that you find to be very attractive, but sometimes they are not the best things. They're

not the things that God has designed for you. God has a special plan for you and there is a lot of things that can sidetrack you in life and prevent you from experiencing the blessing that God has. In fact there's a lot of landmines during adolescent years that look very attractive and everybody else is doing it. When you get involved in some of those things, they can hinder your ability to enjoy the blessing.

That's true for any of us. I think sometimes we need to step back like Abraham. God is speaking through his life and He's speaking through God Himself and He's saying, "Alright. We have to do some pruning here. We have to do some prioritizing. We have to evaluate life here because something is getting in the way of your ability to enjoy the promises of God." What is it in your life that may be getting in the way of your ability to enjoy the promises of God? What is it that God is saying you kind of need to move out of your life? It may be hard. It was hard for Abraham. But God is doing something very special in Abraham's life. The pruning that needs to take place.

But he says to him in verse 13 – *And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also.* So in my thinking I'm feeling like this is unfair. I have a lot of compassion for families and what takes place in family life and here I see a family kind of breaking up here. So I'm feeling uncomfortable about this in my own heart. I was really wrestling with this in the story and I'm going, "How am I going to explain this on Sunday? What am I going to say about this?" Because it seems unfair to me. But notice I want you to see that God has a plan going on. And it's not just a plan for Abraham and not just a plan for Sarah, but there's a plan here for this boy and Hagar. It says – *"I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring."* So God has a plan for these other people. He's working out that plan.

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.

The part of Abraham's story, the perspective of Abraham, the lesson we need to grasp out of this is this: That there are some things in our lives that we need to move out even though they're hard because they're hindering our ability to enjoy the promise. That's the application there.

But let's go on because I want to take now and look at this from the perspective of Hagar. One of the encouraging things in this passage for me is that there is more material about Hagar than about Abraham and Sarah. God is obviously very compassionate. You're going to see Him caring for her in a very special way. So let's look at that now and see this whole story. Now we're going to move over to the perspective of Hagar. How is she looking at this? What is God doing in her life?

So she's out in the wilderness wandering around with her skin of water. *When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes.* She said, "Okay, come over here. You lie down here under the bush here. I'm going to go a little distance away." *Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot* (let's say that's about eighty yards), where she could still see him over there, but she couldn't hear him, he couldn't hear her, and she could have some alone time with the Lord. That's what's going to take place here. She

doesn't know that. She's just going away and she's going to be crying. It says – *And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept.* She's just distraught.

Parents, I'm sure there are times in your life where you have been distraught over the choices of your children. Remember in this story Ishmael had laughed. He had caused a problem in the party. It was probably something more than just the party, but this was the last straw for them. So she's going away saying, "Lord, I'm sad not just for me, I'm sad for my child." Don't you feel that way sometimes? Your child has done something wrong, your child has moved in a place that they shouldn't be, and your heart just breaks. That's what's happening with Hagar. Her heart is breaking. Young people, you need to know that when you mess up it hurts your parents too. Parents suffer because your parents have wrapped up a lot of their desires in you. That's important to understand.

So she's weeping, she's sad in the midst of this. She seems all alone. It seems like she's despairing. It seems like nothing else is around that can help her. That's what it seems like. And that's how it feels when we are despairing at times. But that really isn't the case. Watch what happens here in the story.

And God heard the voice of the boy (interesting how He hears the voice of the boy, but is going to talk to Hagar), *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. Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation."* I have a plan here. I'm working that plan out.

Notice what happens here in the passage. *Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.* The well was there the whole time. What does the well represent for her? The well is going to be her life. I mean she's going to get water now so she can continue to live. God is providing this well. But the well was there. She just opened her eyes and God allowed her to see it. Before she was so concerned about her son and her own predicament, she was weeping, she couldn't tell what was going on. And now God's revealed it. There's a well. There's a well right here for you. I'm going to sustain you. I just really like that picture of the well.

Let me introduce you to Anna. She won't ever be able to come to the Barn now. Anna visited our church back when we were at the Pond Road Middle School. She lived in Virginia and had come up here for chemotherapy because of pancreatic cancer. Anna is dying now. I met with her on Friday in the home, just a couple miles here from the Barn. She told me I could share her story with you. Anna is dying and after my meeting with her the people from hospice were coming to meet with her that afternoon as well. So you can imagine that situation that's rather challenging.

So I sat with Anna who is a Christian. She loves the Lord so much. You can see it on her face. You can see it as she talks. She can't talk very loud right now because she's just weak in her body. I told her in our conversation (I was there for about an hour) and I said to her, "Let me tell you what I'm preaching on Sunday. I'm preaching about this well, this well that provided sustenance and hope for someone who was struggling. That God is the one who provides those things for us." She just said, "Yes, I really need the well. The well of Jesus Christ. I need that in my life."

I asked her this question. I said, “What Bible verses have been helpful for you during this time in your life?” And she was quick to say, “You know the verse that’s helped me the most is the end of the gospel of John in the last chapter of John where Jesus is talking to Peter and he’s telling Peter how he’s going to die.” Now I have never looked at this passage the way Anna had looked at it. I’ve never looked at this passage from the eyes of a dying woman, from someone who only has a little bit longer to live. So Peter is before Jesus in the story and Jesus is telling Peter how he’s going to die. And what does Peter say? Peter says, “Well what about him?” pointing at John. Anna says, “You know in my life I’ve had some challenges, I’ve had some struggles, and sometimes I go to that place and I say, ‘Lord, why me? What about that person? How come they...’ and so on. God keeps coming back to me and says, ‘You follow me. I have a plan for you.’ And I find great hope and great encouragement in that.”

I said to her, “You know I was wrestling this week in my own heart with this passage in Genesis 21 because I’m feeling like it seems unfair that Hagar is being sent away and Ishmael is going away. I think that what you’re sharing with me is so helpful for me to understand that sometimes what I think is unfair is just my human inability to understand what’s going on. But God has a special plan for this person and that person. It’s not up to me to try to balance the scales for everyone. I just need to realize God is at work in this person.”

It’s so important for each one of us to not compare ourselves to others and say, “What about that person?” This is especially helpful for young people who sometimes compare and compete with others. To say, “God, what are you doing in my life? I want to follow you. I know I’m a unique track, I’m on a unique and individualized plan with you. And you have a special plan for me. I just need to trust you in the midst of that.”

So that’s what’s taking place here. She sees this well. So please pray for Anna in these days of hers. She loves the Lord and she’s sharing with Jesus with people as she can. But God has a plan and is working that plan.

She told me that when she found out she had cancer, the Lord spoke to her and said, “I’m going to heal you.” She says, “The Lord says, ‘I’m going to heal you,’ but I didn’t know whether God meant He’s going to heal me here on earth or He’s going to heal me with a new body when I get to heaven. It looks like it’s going to be when I get to heaven that He’s going to heal me with a new body.” So pray for Anna and her continued walk with the Lord at this point. But it reminds me how God opened her eyes and she saw this well of water.

And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. Now she has this hope, this sustenance because of God at work in her life. And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt. So we get this kind of bigger picture of what takes place in Ishmael’s life that God is working in him. Just another picture of God’s grace in the midst of this story.

Well we look at it from Sarah’s point of view and we see that sometimes we have to wait for the promise, but we can be tickled with the promise that God gives us. If we look at this from

Abraham's perspective we see that sometimes God needs to prune us and take away some of the things that are hindering us from enjoying the promise. And if we look at it from Hagar's perspective, we see that God has a well. Whenever we're discouraged and disappointed and we're hurting, there is a well there and we need to find that well that God wants for us so that He can refresh us and inspire us to go forward.

But there are two people we haven't looked at yet and from their perspective (this is Ishmael and Isaac), we're going to go to Galatians 4 for sermon number two. This will be brief, but let me just share with you from the passage in Galatians 4. You see Paul is writing in Galatians and he's saying there's two kinds of people. There are slave people, represented by Ishmael, and there are promise people, represented by the promise of God through Isaac. He's going to retell this story from Genesis 21. That's why I feel like I have to share it with you now.

He's saying don't live like a slave, live like a free person. Because you're free. You see, you're a slave if you're bound by performance-based religion. If you keep coming and saying to God, "God, I think I've done enough. Are you pleased with me today?" That's performance-based religion. We do a lot of performance-based stuff in our world. Right? You go to class, you get a grade. If you do well, you get a good grade. If you don't, you get a bad grade. You go to work and you do a good job, you get paid. You might even get a bonus. If you don't do well, you lose your job. So there's a lot of performance-based stuff in our world. But not with God. God doesn't love us based on our performance. If you're going to be a slave to that then it's going to create fear in your life. You're going to need to be delivered from that. You're going to have pain and problems because it's all about a human approach to God.

Yet there is another approach to God that has to do with the promise of God. And you are a son of the promise, you are a daughter of the promise. So this is just a piece. I read a little bit of Galatians 4 during worship. I'm going to read this passage. Listen to the story as it unfolds and the message that God has for us. Galatians 4:21 – *Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? 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 according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise. One, we have compromise, one with a human trying to solve the problem. And the other was this beautiful promise, this supernatural birth, this understanding of divine promise.*

Notice verse 24. He says – *These things are being taken figuratively.* So he says I'm going to tell you a figurative story about these two people, Isaac and Ishmael. *The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves (just slaves): This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.*

Now you, brothers and sisters (he's talking to you and me), like Isaac, are children of promise. You see if you're an Isaac, if you're children of promise, you live differently than the person who's a slave person because you have access to the freedom that God wants you to have. The deliverance that He provides. You don't have to be a slave to fear now. You don't have to be

empowered by this performance-based religion. Now you have a personal relationship with the Father. You are free. There is a freedom that you enjoy that's really special.

Verse 29. This is part of the story, remember? *At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit.* By laughing at him. Remember that? *It is the same now.* The same thing is now inside of you. You have wrestling with the flesh, pushing against the Spirit that God has for you inside. There's that persecution. *But He says, "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."* Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Now this is chapter 4. The very next verse in chapter 5 is all about living in the Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit is talked about there. Don't live by the deeds of the flesh, live by the deeds (or the fruits) of the Spirit in your life. What God is saying here is let's look at it from the perspective of these guys, Isaac and Ishmael. You are one of those. I want you to choose to recognize if you've trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you are a son or a daughter of the promise. Which means you can experience God in this special way and you can enjoy the freedom that He has for you. I trust that God will use that idea in your life, that you will live differently. Whether you're looking at this from Sarah's perspective or Abraham's perspective or Hagar's perspective or the boy's perspective, you're going to be motivated to live differently. Because you are a son or a daughter of Jesus Christ, a son or a daughter of the King, a son or a daughter of the promise. And that comes from a supernatural birth, the birth that comes by being born again.

Very interesting passage. Paul thought it was interesting enough to create a whole other sermon about it. But something that we can take with us and apply to our lives. I trust that God will use this in your heart, whether you're a child or a young person or an adult, that God would speak to you and allow you to live differently this week. To do some self-evaluation. To wonder, Lord, what is it that I need to do to enjoy the beauty of the promises? To be tickled by the promises of God? That's what I want in my own heart.

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we are grateful for the special relationship that we can enjoy with you because we are your children. I ask that you would bless my brothers and sisters here as they try to live in that. Lord, whether there's areas that need to be cut out or robbing them of the blessing, give them the courage to do the difficult work on pruning those things out. Lord, I ask that you would help us to be able to see your promises and to trust you. Even in times when we don't see the promises fulfilled and recognize that you are working in our hearts, give us a great confidence in you. Lord, give us the ability to follow you and trust you this week as we serve you. In Jesus' name, amen.