Genesis Chapter 21 Verses 1 – 3

* It was 25 years ago…***A lot*** has happened in the last 25 years. But *God said*, the Lord had spoken…and so 25 years or 250 years, ***God’s Word doesn’t fail.*** And the crazy thing is that God’s Word was not fulfilled because Abraham was perfectly obedient…***this blows my mind!*** God’s Word was fulfilled simply because no matter any else, nothing else, ***God is faithful to His Word!***

Genesis Chapter 21 Verses 4 – 7

* I like this statement she makes. *“All who hear will laugh with me!”* That’s a **great** statement. Isaac’s name literally means, *“Laughter,”* and before him we don’t have an account of anyone being named with that type of ***title.*** Names were very *title-rich* then…not so much today. Today we have to go and buy plaques on Amazon that tell us what our names mean.
* For example, (I had to look this up), *“Matthew”* means *“Gift of God!”* **HA**! ***Was there any doubt!!*** *“James”* is actually a name that is derived from the Hebrew name Jacob and it means, *“Supplanter,”* so watch out for those. *“Ben”* or *“Benjamin”* means *“Son of my right hand,”* so that’s pretty neat. And *“Chin”* means…well…***the bottom of your face!*** **HA!!** But the point is that none of us knew that without research. Not so in the days of Abraham.
* Folks would know something ***immediately*** about you, your family or your heritage when they heard your first name and for Isaac, folks would think…, *“Laughter?”* *“What’s up with that!?”* And then **Sarah would tell them what God had said, and what God had done** and they would laugh together. ***I love that!*** Isaac becomes, *just by name*, a testimony to the wondrous power of God and Sarah is looking forward to talking about it…I just like that.

Genesis Chapter 21 Verses 8 – 11

* Isaac and Ishmael were 13 years apart and most likely Isaac is probably about 3 years old although folks do disagree about this subject of ***weaning.*** Some say a child was weaned, which literally means *transitioning a child to solid food*, at the age of around 3 while others argue it could have been later but at any rate, most *or the majority* settle around 3 years old…so Ishmael is probably 16 years old at this time.
* And Sarah once again becomes upset with Hagar because of her son, Ishmael, but notice…***this time it’s provoked.*** Ishmael is showing signs of resentment towards Isaac. Conflict at some point between the two boys was probably inevitable but notice the conflict begins, *originates from*, Ishmael. Paul refers to this conflict in his letter to the church in Galatia.
* In Galatians Chapter 4, Paul is *refuting legalism* and he does it by pointing back to Sarah and Hagar. The legalists would call out, *“We are sons of Abraham!”* But Paul would ask them, ***“But who is your mother?”*** Hagar was a slave and her son was born according to the flesh. Sarah was a freewoman and her son was born according to God’s promise. And so while the legalists and the religious elite were promoting a relationship with God according to the law, the true gospel of grace offers liberty in Jesus and is a promise ***received by faith.***
* He says then in Galatians 4:29, *“He who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, and even so it is now…”*  He continues, *“Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.”*
* I see the spiritual parallel and understand the doctrinal message of casting out the bondwoman and her son…***that’s what I need to do***…that’s what the Spirit of God does in my heart and life…defeats the slave of the flesh in me…but this *account,* for me, ***it’s still hard.*** She is still a human being. He is still just a young man…this is a tough story for me…***personally.***
* One other point here which is **entirely important.** Galatians 4:23-24 says, “*He who was of bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, is Hagar…”* This is a ***huge point!*** Paul draws a parallel of Hagar to the law…so what? Here’s what…
* The New Covenant is according to *freedom and liberty and life* through Jesus Christ and something in us ***says, thinks, feels, urges, calls out*** that if we are struggling with sin then we need to put in place **more rules** in our lives…or if we are wanting to walk in love or walk in obedience then by golly ***that’s what I’ve got to do***…, **“I’ve just GOT to walk in that!”** Look, the heart in that is right, the spirit is willing, but you won’t find the strength to do it…***cast out the bondwoman***…here’s the crazy thing…you don’t have to set up rules and you don’t have to try to ***“walk in it,”*** all you **HAVE** to do is ***give your life to Jesus***…draw nearer to Jesus!!
* Rules don’t work because if we fail then we turn to the flesh in ***blame***…and if we succeed then we turn to the flesh in ***pride***…*look what I’ve done!* Or we start to look around and say, *“I can do it, why can’t you!?”* ***And love goes all off the rails!*** ***You and I don’t need rules, we need to be genuine in our walks with the Lord!***
* My desire for my children is not to put a bunch of rules on them but rather to teach them to trust and to love Jesus and to show them how to walk with Him (believe from within Him)…that will lead them to *liberty and New Covenant life*…and oh by the way, ***that will lead them to the strength to walk in righteousness!!!*** That will wean them in the Lord…*get them off of milk and onto meat!*

Genesis Chapter 21 Verses 12 – 14

* At first glance this *seems* heartless and cruel…and really **tragically weird!** We know Abraham loves Ishmael! Remember back when God promised Isaac, Abraham said, *“Oh that Ishmael would live before You!”* Asking for Ishmael to be the heir…but now he gives them nothing but a bit of bread and one bottle of water and sends them out? **Crazy tragic.** BUT. God said to Abraham, I WILL make of him a great nation…this is tragic for sure but this is ***great faith*** in the midst of ***great tragedy***.
* Paul would write to the Romans, *“Make no provision for the flesh,”* and here we see that in the spiritual parallel of this scene…

Genesis Chapter 21 Verses 15 – 19

* I pray for ***that*** in my own life. *God open my eyes to the wells of water that are right in front of me*…the ones that I can’t see as I sit here thirsty and sometimes losing hope…

Genesis Chapter 21 Verses 20 – 21

* And thus the Arabic people were born…

Genesis Chapter 21 Verses 22 – 26

* A sore spot for Abraham no doubt…an argument over a well of water….(remember Lot)

Genesis Chapter 21 Verses 27 – 34

* Abimelech has essentially done harm to Abraham but what does Abraham do…***gives to him.*** Offers him a covenant and that covenant **costs him**…isn’t that just like the Father? All I’ve ever done is harm Him and yet He gave to me…to bring peace. Cost Him dearly. Cost Him His Son. Cost Him everything…And every time Abimelech would look at one of those lambs, he would remember the *integrity, strength of character, ambition for peace and passion for love*…it’s the same for us today…
* And so Abraham moves on again and again we see him calling on the name of the Lord…Abimelech said earlier, *“God is with you in all that you do…”* and now we get a glimpse at why. **Abraham would have it no other way**…***NO OTHER WAY***…how about you?