

MESSAGE

TWO CHILDREN, A FAMILY AND THE INTERWEAVING PROMISES OF GOD

FAITH LIFE | GENESIS 21:1-21 | NOVEMBER 1/2, 2014 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him." (Genesis 21:2)

The Story of Two Children

- Ishmael (*'God hears'*)
- Isaac (*'he laughs'*)

A Family

- Family dynamics
- Family distress
- Our family

The Interweaving Promises of God

- Differentiating God's Plans and Our Plans
- Promises for Isaac
- Promises for Ishmael
- Promises for Hagar
- Promises for Sarah
- Promises for Abraham
- Promises for Us

STUDY GUIDE

1. When have you experienced God's grace in the midst of your life situation? What happened and how did that change you?
2. The "Faith Life" series continues this week at Eastbrook as we study Genesis 21:1-21. Ask God to speak to you before you read this chapter of Genesis aloud.
3. This entire story is built upon the promises of God. From what you read in verses 1-5, how has God fulfilled His promises to Abraham and Sarah? You may want to look back at Genesis 12:1-7; 13:14-17; 15:1-6; 17:15-22; and 18:9-15.
4. Why do you think this promise fulfillment would cause such laughter and joy for Sarah, as we see in verses 6-7?
5. When have you experienced God's work in your life with great joy? How did that change the way you related with God and others?
6. Isaac was likely weaned at three years of age, and very soon thereafter tensions arise in the family. What was the source of the tension? How do you think the incident about 16 years before this found in Genesis 16:1-6 affected what was happening now?
7. What is Sarah asking Abraham to do in verse 10? What is Abraham's response in verse 11? What is God's response in verses 12-13?
8. How do you see the plans of Sarah and Abraham intersecting or conflicting with the plans of God? What is God's aim and what are Sarah and Abraham's aims? What do you think it takes to bring our plans or aims more closely together with God's plans or aims?
9. From verses 14-20, make a list of the needs of Hagar and Ishmael and the gracious response of God in the midst of that. How is God responding to this single mother in deep difficulty?
10. What is one way you could tangibly respond to what God is speaking to you through this week's study? If you are on your own, write it down and talk with someone else about it this week. If you are with a group, take some time to discuss this with one another.

[Next week we will look at a pivotal moment in Abraham's life of faith with God from Genesis 22. Read that passage ahead of time to prepare for the study.]