

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION

Genesis – Living in Redemptive Grace

Sermon Series

04, 11 September 2022	Genesis 20-21	God's Faithfulness Despite Our Failure
18, 25 September 2022	Genesis 22-23	Faith Tested and Persevering

04, 11 September 2022

Genesis 20-21

God's Faithfulness Despite Our Failure

All of us have moments where our faith and our actions do not match. Why do you think these moments happen?

STUDY

Read Genesis 20:1-18.

1. Abraham once again says that Sarah is his sister, without mentioning that she is also his wife. Compare Gen 20 with Gen 12:10-20. What are the similarities and differences here?

	Gen 20	Gen 12:10-20
Promise of descendants	Sarah will have a son Gen 15, 18:9-15	Abram will be made a great nation Gen 12:1-3, 7
Reason(s) for deception	1. 2. 3.	1.
God's action		
What Abraham was given		
Reason for gift to Abraham		

Dig Deeper

Abraham said "I did it because I thought, 'There is no fear of God at all in this place.'" Do you think this is a good reason? Have we also used this reasoning in our own lives?

What was Abraham's response to being caught in a lie? What does this reveal about Abraham's faith in God?

2. Abimelech makes a big deal of declaring Sarah's innocence before all. Think about the larger Abraham narrative – why is this important, not just for Abimelech, but also for Abraham and Sarah?

3. Read Gen 20 and Gen 12:10-20 again. Do you think Abraham/Abram was repentant? Why or why not?

Read Genesis 21:1-21.

4. Sarah gives birth to a son named Isaac (laughter). What is the significance of Isaac's name? (Gen 21:6; see also Gen 17:17 and Gen 18:12-15)

5. Sarah saw Ishmael mocking (laughter again) Isaac at Isaac's weaning celebration feast and told Abraham to banish Hagar and Ishmael. What was Sarah's reason for this, and what was God's response to it? (vv.8-13)

6. Ishmael's name means "God hears" and here again God heard the cry of Ishmael and Hagar and acts on their behalf. What does God do, and in what way(s) does this fulfil God's promises to Hagar and Abraham? (See also Gen 16:11-12, Gen 17:20, Gen 21:13.)

Dig Deeper

What is the significance of Abraham circumcising his son Isaac when he was eight days old? Why did Abraham do this? Baptism today replaces circumcision as the sign of belonging to God's people – how does this add to your understanding of the purpose of baptism and what it is for?

Why was the occasion of Isaac being weaned an important event, and why is this linked to inheritance?

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

7. What strikes you about Abraham in these two chapters? Does he deserve God's action to fulfil His promises?

8. Consider Abraham's professed faith and his actions. Do they match up with each other? Have we also experienced similar situations in our lives? Share with your group if you have.

APPLICATION

9. Second Timothy 1:9-10 reminds us that God has saved us and called us to a holy life not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. In what way(s) have you seen this in the life of Abraham so far, as well as in your own?

10. Think about the passage we have just studied. In what way(s) have your thinking and beliefs been renewed? What does God want you to do with what you have learnt?

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson and a key verse from this study.

How should we pray and change in response to what we have learnt?

DISCIPLESHIP IN COMMUNITY

- **Discuss and Check:** Discuss with your group members what the life of a Christian disciple should look like based on what we believe. Write it down in specifics, including responses to everyday situations that we encounter. Bring it back the next study and talk about whether your daily lives matched fully with what you said it should be.

PRAY FOR ORPC – CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

- Pray for God to bring the right Children's Pastor to our Children Ministry
- Pray for God's sustaining grace upon the co-labourers and teachers in the Ministry.
- Pray for our children to grow in the knowledge and grace of our Lord.

18, 25 September 2022

Genesis 22-23

Faith Tested and Persevering

How do you know that someone trusts you fully?

STUDY

Read Genesis 22:1-10. The binding of Isaac is one of the key stories in Genesis. God's demand of Abraham to bind and sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering is one that is difficult for us to accept, because it does not seem to fit with the character of the God revealed in the rest of the Bible. Genesis 22:1 gives us the key to reconciling this by telling us "God tested Abraham", explaining to us that God's instruction to Abraham was by way of a test.

1. What instruction did God give Abraham, and why was this particularly difficult for Abraham? (Consider God's prior promises to Abraham, as well as Ishmael's previous banishment.)

2. What was Abraham's response to God's instruction? What surprises you about it?

Dig Deeper

How is the story of the proposed sacrifice of Isaac like the actual sacrifice Jesus Christ? Consider the following comparisons:

- Genesis 22:8 and John 1:29

- Genesis 22:6 and John 19:17

- Genesis 22:1-10 and Acts 8:26-34

- Genesis 22:2 and John 3:16

Place yourself in the scene. Think about how Abraham and Isaac felt as the scene played out. What strikes you most as you imagine this scene?

Read Genesis 22:11-19. Seeing Abraham's obedience, God sends His messenger to stop Abraham and to provide the ram as a substitute offering.

3. What did the angel of the Lord say as he stopped Abraham? What does this reveal to us about the nature of God's test of Abraham?

4. The test concludes with God reaffirming his promise to Abraham. On a first reading, it sounds like Abraham has earned God's fulfilment of His promise through his obedience with Isaac. But God had earlier already confirmed and ratified His covenant with Abraham in Gen 15:17-21. What do you think God's message to Abraham here is about then?

Dig Deeper

Read Exodus 13:1-2, 11-13. Compare this with what Abraham has done here. What parallels do you see?

Read Genesis 23:1-20. We are told that Sarah passed away at the age of 127 years (the only age at death recorded for a woman in the Bible). Abraham mourns for her and seeks a burial place for her and for his family.

5. Abraham asks to buy property for a burial site from the Hittites (v.3). How do the Hittites respond? Are they willing to sell him the land?

6. Why is it significant that Abraham sought to bury Sarah in Canaan? Consider God's promises such as Genesis 12:1, 7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8.

Dig Deeper

Why do you think Abraham refused to accept the cave of Machpelah (and the field) from Ephron the Hittite as a gift?

Why is it important that Ephron's field in Machpelah near Mamre was deeded to Abraham as his property in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city?

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

7. In Genesis 22-23, we see how Abraham acts out his faith in God. What would such faith look like today?

APPLICATION

8. Isaac represented all of Abraham's hopes and dreams for his future. What are your hopes and dreams for your future? Is it easy for you to surrender this to God?
9. Abraham demonstrated faith in God, even though the situation right in front of him gave no visible evidence of God's action (no ram at first, and he remained a sojourner in Canaan). In New Testament times, with Jesus' work on the cross, those who believe in Christ know that God has promised us eternal life in His Son. How can we know that our hope in this promise is not just wishful thinking? What guarantees our hope?
10. Think about the passage we have just studied. In what way(s) have your thinking and beliefs been renewed? What does God want you to do with what you have learnt?

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson and a key verse from this study.

How should we pray and change in response to what we have learnt?

DISCIPLESHIP IN COMMUNITY

- **Pray:** Share with each other how the group can pray for you personally as you surrender all areas of your life to God.

PRAY FOR ORPC – YOUTH MINISTRY

- Pray for our youths to catch the heartbeat for Christ, to grow towards Christlikeness and give themselves to the disciple-making mandate.
- Pray for our youths to grow in commitment to Christ and one another.
- Pray for the youths of ORPC to forge a strong and vibrant Christian sub-community.
- Pray for deeper and meaningful engagement with and among the youths' parents, as well as the church community, in contributing to the holistic development of our youths.
- Pray for strength, wisdom and prayerful dependence upon the Lord for the ministry leaders.
- Pray that God will provide many adult members as godly models and for ORPC to be a community that reflect the Gospel for our youths.