

Women's Devo Study: Hagar Devo #1
Theme: Waiting on God's will & God's way
Text: Genesis 16: 1 - 10
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Welcome to the first of my weekly Devotional Newsletters. I love studying the Bible and my prayer is that these devos impact your walk with the Lord, and that the Lord speaks to you through them. I'm making the first one of the series free. Then if you'd like to continue following along with the series, I'm offering them for \$5 a month. If you decide to support me through my devos, I'm very grateful, and excited to see you deepen your relationship with God. For a whole year the theme will focus on different women in the bible, and applying what we learn from their life stories to our lives today, and our walk with God. To kick off the series, I'd like to start with the incredible (though little talked about) story of Hagar. Her story is a powerful example of what it looks like to be chased by God's love, encountered by him, delivered by him & blessed by him. So let's get into it!

Hagar was the maidservant of Abram and Sarai in the bible. (In this passage they were still Abram & Sarai, and had not had their name changed by the Lord.) It's possible that Hagar was gifted to Abram by Pharaoh when Abram was passing through Egypt. If you recall, this was when he had lied about Sarai being his sister, and received gifts from Pharaoh, before Pharaoh found out the truth. We don't know much about Hagar herself, until Sarai becomes impatient with God's promise for a son. The text starts off saying "Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children." This is followed up by Sarai saying "The Lord has kept me from having children." Instead of seeking the Lord, and consulting him, she acts in her flesh, and finds a different way to get a child. This reminds me of Eve's sin in the garden when she disobeyed God, and tried to gain wisdom apart from him. Even though Sarai has the promise for a child from the Lord, and she knows he is keeping her from it at the moment, she rebels against him. This shows either a lack of faith that the Lord would fulfill his promise, and/or a lack of trust that God's timing would be perfect. Abram sins as well, because the text says he agrees with Sarai's idea of getting a son through Abram sleeping with their servant Hagar. This act of disobedience leads to hurt for everyone involved.

"Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-7

Later, the text says Hagar despises Sarai when she finds out she's pregnant. This affects Sarai enough for her to go to Abram about it. She blames him for her suffering, and leaves it to God to judge between them. Abram grants her the permission to do what she likes to Hagar. So Sarai mistreats Hagar, and it's so bad that Hagar runs away into the desert. We can only imagine the kind of pain that Hagar is in. The text says that Sarai gave Hagar as a wife to Abram, but it doesn't mention anything about getting consent from Hagar. She's forced to sleep with her

master, and then mistreated by her mistress for doing the very thing that her mistress had asked Abram to do. On top of that, Hagar is a foreigner, serving a family from a different land, living far from her people, and possibly risks her and her baby's life as she ran away. But then the unexpected happens: God meets Hagar.

We learn so much about God's character here. 1) He's the God who cares. He cares about the gentile servant, because he cares about all people. He has created us all, has saved us from the power of sin through Jesus, and desires a relationship with all of us. Jesus commanded the disciples to preach the gospel to all nations, because God's heart is that all nations have the chance to accept & be with him. (*"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."* - 2nd Peter 3:9) The gospel testifies to his love. He sent Jesus to die and resurrect for our sins, and through him offers the free gift of salvation, full life, and reconciliation to relationship to him. We also see here that God is 2) the God who rescues. There's a verse from Ezekiel that says *"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them."* - Ezekiel 34:11 And he does exactly that for Hagar. He meets her, speaks to her, and is ready to rescue and bless her. 3) He's the God who Knows her. He calls her by name and says: "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from? And where are you going?"

I love the way God meets her. He meets her as she's trying to escape affliction. He meets her in the middle of her running away from pain. He meets her as she's possibly running to the place she thinks could heal her. And that's where God introduces himself to her. And I love the questions that God uses. Where have you come from seems to address the past, and Where are you going seems to address the future. But these questions may also be touching on identity. Who is Hagar, & what has happened to her, and what will happen to her? And most importantly I believe these questions function to help Hagar know God. We all come from God (created by him,) and his desire is that we all go to him (in this life and then in heaven.) And regardless of what she understood about her past, future, or identity, in her present, she was having an encounter with the living God. I think, through these questions, God helps Hagar search her heart, and also helps her understand God's heart for her. Her answer is honest, "I'm running away from my mistress." Then God gives her an instruction & a blessing. He instructs her to go back and submit to Sarai, and he promises Hagar he will increase her descendants through her son beyond what she can count. Hagar must've believed him, because she obeys him. This brings us to a paradoxical parallel. Sarai knew the Lord for years and already had the promise from the Lord for a son, and for a nation to come from him. However, Sarai failed at trusting & submitting to the Lord's way. Yet here we see a gentile maidservant, who has just met God, not only receive the same promise, but show a readiness to submit, obey, and trust God. And she does this even though it means returning to the one who mistreated her, to the source of her pain. It's the opposite direction from where she was going. So why does she listen to God? (We will talk more about that in Devo 2.)

"But now thus says the Lord who created you, Jacob, and he who formed you, Israel: "Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name." - Isaiah 43:1

Application:

Where are you going? Where have you come from?

God didn't have to ask Hagar where she was in the present because it was evident she was with God. So when he asks these two questions it makes me want to reflect on where I see God in my past, and where he is in my future. And maybe even how his hand is at work in my past, present and future. Sometimes we obsess too much over what has happened in the past, overthink our present, and get overly anxious for the future. If we're not careful, we can miss how God is trying to meet us in the present, and what he is trying to do for us. In Hagar's present he met her in her pain, introduced himself, gave her the instruction that would lead to life, and promised her blessing. Whatever instruction God is giving you, may you carry it out with faithfulness and diligence, and experience his blessings. But don't forget that the biggest blessing is fellowship with God himself. For this devo's application write down:

- 1) Where have you seen God at work in your past, and what wounds from the past do you need him to heal?
- 2) What anxieties about your future do you need to bring before the Lord? Ask him to reaffirm the plans that he has for you both in this life, and (according to scripture) what he has for you eternally.
- 3) What question do you think God would ask you or what questions is he asking you? Pour out your heart to him in a prayer journal entry. Be genuine about any requests you have, and ask him to strengthen your faith in him to act. But also take time to sit and wait for the Lord to speak to you in prayer, or as you study his word.
- 4) Pray intentionally for seven days, and ask the Lord to reveal what he is doing in your present. Thank him for his goodness in a different way each day. Also jot down anything he is teaching you in your present.
- 5) Ask God to reveal areas you need to wait on him for, and be in submission to him for. Sarai wanted the right blessing but at the wrong time. Submit to the Lord's timing. Make a list jotting down what you believe is your part that you need to do, and what is God's part. Reflect on the fact that God is in control, and practice being still before the Lord, trusting that he will do his part, and continue to bring on the breakthrough and miracles that you need in your life.

Scripture to reference:

Psalms 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted over the nations, I will be exalted over the earth."

Romans 12:2 "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is- his good, pleasing, and perfect will."

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans to prosper you, and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope, and a future."

Isaiah 26:3 "You will keep him in perfect peace him whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee."

Romans 10:13 "All who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Psalm 107:13 "Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress."

Prayer: Thank you for reading my dero! May the Lord bless you, and may you grow to intimately know the love of Christ more and more. May you seek the Lord's face, and see him meet you & direct you in extraordinary, intentional, life-changing ways! In Jesus name, amen!