

Women's Devo Study: Hagar Devo #5
Theme: Believing in the Lord's Promise
(Part 1) "Before the Breakthrough"
Text: Genesis 21
By Larissa Lima Delgado

"I took care of you in the wilderness, in a land burned by drought." - Hosea 13:5

Welcome back to my Devo series on Hagar! In the last devo we spoke about God's Sovereignty, and mentioned that Sarah's request to send Hagar & her son away would not cancel out the blessing that the Lord had for them. This time around, God instructs Abraham to give food and water for Hagar to take with her. Hagar had been met and rescued by the Lord in the desert before. And as far as we can tell, the first time she was rescued from the Lord, was also the first time she had had a real encounter with him. However, just like many of us, even though the Lord has delivered us before, we sometimes have trouble believing that he will do so again. In Hagar's story, 14 years have now passed since she had returned and submitted to Sarah. This time it wasn't her choice to leave, but God still showed up for her and her son. He took note of their distress and heard their cry. In this devo, we will be talking about How to continue to have steadfast faith for what the Lord has promised us in our desert season/transition/struggle.

It's always amazing to have these huge miracle stories in our backpocket about when we go through a hardship, and where at the very last minute, the Lord shows up and comes through for us. However, rarely do we enjoy going through the process that happens before the miracle. For example: When I did my Discipleship Training School with YWAM, our team divided into two groups for the Outreach period: one group would go to Malaysia and the other to Vietnam. However, in the beginning, I had to stay behind from my team, because my Visa for Vietnam had not been approved in time. So I had to move into my leader's home and wait. After a week of waiting & checking & calling, my leaders almost switched me to the Malaysia team. But then just ten minutes before they hopped on the call to switch me over, my Visa for Vietnam suddenly got approved. And to be honest, my initial reaction wasn't praise, but frustration. I was relieved to know where I was finally going, but my first thought was: why did God allow me to go through this emotional roller coaster for a week, if at the end of it all I was supposed to go to Vietnam? Now the story is a strong reminder and encouragement of God's faithfulness, and of his perfect timing. But back then the process of highs and lows of that week were difficult to walk through. But I praise the Lord that his will came true, and that even in the highs and lows, he never left me. Hagar probably wasn't excited either about the journey that preceded her miracle. Although she was familiar with the Lord's deliverance, this time was likely harder, because now she also had to see her son suffer. But the Lord still came through.

At first, it even seems like Hagar is entering the same situation with an upper hand, because now she has physical resources. But when the resources run out, the test of

her heart comes in. Was she trusting in God or in the resources? And would she continue to trust in God after the resources ran out? We can reason that, the whole reason she had resources to begin with was because of God's instruction to Abraham. So the resources come from God, like *"every good and perfect gift."-James 1:17* So if they ran out was God still good? Didn't God know how much she and her son would need for the journey? We don't know what questions ran through her head. But we know that she was especially affected by her son's suffering. The text says "when the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down nearby, for she thought "I cannot watch the boy die." Remember that 14 years had passed since the last time she was in the desert. Ishmael wasn't a little kid, he was a teenager. We don't know how long they went without food and water, but for Hagar to place him under the bushes, meant that he was very weak. And if he was very weak, it had been a long time. And in that moment of lack & hardship she really believed her son was going to die.

"God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear..."Psalms 46:1

Part of why I believe God permitted Hagar & Ishmael to get to this point was so that God could demonstrate His power & care for Hagar AND her son. I believe God was interested in not only strengthening Hagar's faith, but also her SON's faith. To not only encounter Hagar, but to encounter her son too. Hagar had a word from the Lord for Ishmael. In *Genesis 16* God had said to her *"I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count."* And in *Genesis 17* God told Abram he would make Ishmael into a great nation. Ishmael's own name means *"God has heard of our misery."* But despite this, Hagar's circumstances got so dire, that it made her begin to believe God's promise was going to die. We sometimes face similar situations. Even when we've had God reiterate a promise to us, timing can make us doubt, or our contradictory circumstances can make us doubt. We can be tempted to question God's goodness, or if we even heard God right to begin with. But the word says *"the righteous live by faith,"-Habakuk 2:4,* and that faith is the *"certainty of what is unseen."* *-Hebrews 11:1* So even if our current circumstances don't align with God's promise, we have to trust in what God has said, and that he always fulfills his promises. The bible says *"he's not a man that he should lie."-Numbers 23:19* So if you're struggling, ask God for the steadfast faith to hold onto his word and his promises for your life, so that your circumstances don't sway you in the other direction. God is greater than your circumstance, and He is sovereign. He is building something in you in the waiting. And if the waiting hurts, he is ready to comfort us, encourage us, renew our faith, and give us the strength to endure, until our promise comes true.

"...the father of the Heavenly lights who does not change like shifting shadows." - James 1:17

The second reason I believe that Hagar goes through this, is to test the attitude of

her heart. Circumstances have a way of revealing what's underneath the surface. When I've suffered lack, the first thing I notice is my tendency to hold bitterness towards other people, and I quickly repent. For others, the temptation that arises is to become cold towards God, or to start to complain about their suffering. Like the Israelites in the desert, who complained as they were literally en route to the promised land. But I think it's beautiful that Hagar doesn't complain or blame God. She's suffering greatly, but instead of complaining, she sincerely cries out of her pain. And when she does, God meets her. *Romans 10:13* says "all who cry out to the Lord will be saved." *Matthew 5:4* says "blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." In *Philippians 4* we're instructed to make our requests known to God, and that in exchange he will give us peace that surpasses understanding. With the right heart posture you can be sincere with the Lord, without complaining, and he will meet you.

"I do believe, help my unbelief." Mark 9:24

Finally, the last reason I believe Hagar goes through this is so that she could once and for all learn true dependence on the Lord, and for him alone to become her security. Search your heart and reflect: Is God your security or is it the opinion of man? Is God your security or is it money? Is God your security or is it your spouse, your gifts, your position etc...Have we made the God-given gift/resource our security instead of our creator? If we have, we're on a shaky foundation, that will crumble when our circumstances go awry. Hagar's circumstances revealed that she was putting her security in the physical resources. So when they were out, she thought her son would die, despite God's promise. Instead of walking by faith and what is unseen, she let what is seen shift her beliefs, and it caused her pain. I think it's grace to let her get to this point, because now when God rescues her, she will KNOW once and for all He is her security, and hopefully won't make anything else a security in place of God. It can be grace to get to a point where the only option you have left is to cry out to God. Impossible situations can be breeding grounds for miracles, because that is when you can experience the impossible rescue from God, and acknowledge that it was God, and nothing else that saved you. So if your situation feels impossible, let me encourage you that our God specializes in the impossible. He is the waymaker and he has never left you. Relying on him is like "building our house on a rock," -*Matthew 7:24* because HE alone is our sure foundation.

It's exactly in this impossible/near-death situation, as Hagar & her son are crying, that God shows up. When He does He meets her, comforts her and rescues her and her son. He starts with showing he cares for her, and second that he cares for her son. Then he gives her an instruction to follow to lift up her boy. And lastly, He miraculously opens up her eyes to show her where the well is, so that she & her son don't die. But more on that in the next devo.

"The Lord has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge."
-Psalms 94:22

Application: Some of my most beautiful moments with Jesus have been when he's encountered me right after me crying. For example: On the first day of this year, 2026, I had a Hagar moment. I was home alone, and felt a lot of emotional pain, and it overwhelmed me to the point that I started crying. I wasn't necessarily praying, but I was bearing myself out before the Lord. Then Jesus met me and I heard him say "let me take care of you today." For me it was a rare encounter with his love, and I'm so grateful to him for it. There was also another time this year where, this time, I was directly praying to the Lord. As I did I also started crying from pain, and then it changed to crying because I was enjoying God's presence. His word says "draw near to me and I will draw near to you,"-James 4:8, & that "he is never far from either of us."-Acts 17:27 I want to encourage you that no matter what kind of struggle/transition you're in, for you to cry out to God, and he will meet you. He can give you encouragement over a promise, comfort for what you're feeling, strength to endure, direction on what to do, and most importantly the beautiful gift of his presence & of his perfect love.

As you answer the reflection questions, search your heart with the Lord:

- 1) Pray for God to search your heart and reveal anything that he needs to expose so that he can correct, heal, etc... Are there any idols? Are you truly depending on God? etc... Is God the greatest love of your life? etc...
- 2) Write down a few promises you're waiting on from the Lord, and ways that the Lord has confirmed to you that they will come true in his timing.
- 3) Ask the Lord what he wants to prepare in you during the waiting/transition/struggle.
- 4) Reflect on past experiences of how the Lord met you in the middle of your struggle. How do these past experiences of the Lord pulling through for you encourage you that he will continue to do so?
- 5) Write down the lies that your circumstance tempts you into believing. These stand in contrast to God's word. So now pair them with the truth from the scriptures.
- 6) What do you like so far about Hagar's journey, and what can you learn from it?

Scriptures to reference:

"Search me oh God, and know me, test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there's any offensive way within me, and lead me on the way everlasting." Psalms 139:23-24

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."-Isaiah 55:11

"Forget the former things, do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness, and streams in the

desert."-Isaiah 43:18-19

"Though the fig tree does not bud, and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails and the field produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen,
and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior,
The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to
tread on the heights."-Habakuk 3:17-19

Prayer: I pray that this devo study blessed you, and that if you've been reading the others in
the series, that they are all edifying your walk with God. May the Lord give you the
strength to endure your waiting season, as he develops what he wants to develop in you, so
that you can 1) be ready to steward your promise well, 2) maintain the correct posture of
your heart before the Lord as the Lord over your life. May he meet you when you cry out to
him. May he draw near to you and shower you with Jesus's perfect love. May you experience
God as your provider, your shepherd, your husband, your maker, your Lord, your friend, and
more. May you live in Jesus's peace & joy, fully depending on him as the sure foundation and
security of your life! And may God make everything that he has for you come true in his way
and in his timing. May he use you mightily for his glory, in Jesus name, amen!