*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 27 – July 2

*Walking with Abraham*

**Monday, July 4 Genesis 16:1-4**

*“Perhaps I can have children through her”*

 The promises made to Abram belong to Sarai as well. Just as Abram will be the father of a great nation, Sarai will be its mother. Yet, as the years pass, Sarai becomes convinced that the promise made to her will not come to fruition. Fearing that her opportunity to have children will fade away, Sarai takes it upon herself to fulfill the promise. Giving her servant, Hagar, to Abram, Sarai looks to accelerate God’s plan. When Hagar becomes pregnant, the results are the opposite of what Sarai expects; rather than receiving the honor due her as the matriarch of God’s people, she is scorned by Hagar.

 Most of us don’t have the patience to wait for God’s timing and provision. We want to see our expectations fulfilled as soon as possible. So, like Sarai, we take matters into our own hands believing that our timing is better. The results are much the same.

 Trusting in God’s promises also means that we must trust in God’s timing. As author of all that is good, God knows what we need and when we need it. Our duty is not to help him fulfill his promises; our duty is to rejoice with others when he is faithful.

*Lord, help me trust in your timing. Amen.*

**Tuesday, July 5 Genesis 16:5-6**

*“…deal with her as you see fit”*

 In verses 5-6, the consequences of Abram and Sarai’s lack of trust in God’s plan are made plain. Like Adam and Eve in the garden, the two try to place blame on one another. Sarai decries Abram for taking Hagar as his wife, and Abram places responsibility for the girl on Sarai, enabling her to mistreat her servant. Caught between the two, Hagar flees hoping to escape the brokenness surrounding her.

 When faced with the consequences of our sin, we like to blame others as well. We look at others and say, “This is all your fault.” We’re too prideful to recognize our responsibility for the mess that surrounds us. We avoid culpability believing that if we deflect, we can escape the situation unscathed.

 If we are to practice the relationships modeled by Christ, we must acknowledge the pain caused by our sin. In the grace of Jesus Christ, we are set free from shame and guilt. By confessing our sin as our own, we witness to a redeeming God.

*Lord, I take responsibility for my sin. Have mercy on me. Amen.*

**Wednesday, July 6 Genesis 16:7-9**

*“The angel of the Lord found Hagar”*

 Picture Hagar is sitting on the side of the road, contemplating her next move. Does she have one? A pregnant servant girl in the wilderness is not exactly a strong case for success. Hagar is in a bad situation. Perhaps her only option is to keep running, hoping that she can outrun her problems.

 Have you ever felt like your only option was to keep running? Sometimes our circumstances and choices can lead us to believe that our only hope of survival is to avoid slowing down. We say to ourselves, “Don’t look back. Just keep moving forward.” We’re afraid that if we linger, our past might catch us.

 Thankfully, Jesus is pursuing us. Like Hagar, God finds our hearts wherever they go. We cannot escape his love. His grace out-paces our brokenness. His mercy does not cease in seeking us out.

*Lord, when I run, your love pursues me. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

July 4 – July 9

*Walking with Abraham*

**Thursday, July 7 Genesis 16:10-12**

*“This cup is the new covenant between God and his people”*

 In Genesis 15, God establishes his covenant with Abram and his descendants. The covenant is God’s unbreakable commitment to be the God of Abram and his family. These aren’t merely words spoken by God; he makes these promises a part of his very being. From this moment forward, God cannot be known apart from his relationship with his people.

 For many of us, the covenant might seem a bit antiquated. What does an ancient agreement between Abram and God have to do with me? The answer: everything! The covenant established between God and Abram serves as the foundation of the relationship we share with God. God’s promises to each of us are rooted in his covenant with Abram.

 In Luke 22, Jesus tells his disciples that God is establishing a new covenant through his death and resurrection. While this covenant in Christ is new, it does not negate the old; the new fulfills the old. Through his redeeming grace, we return to the relationship he wills for each of us, a relationship that finds its beginnings in Genesis 15. As God’s people, covenant is a central part of our relationship with him.

*Lord, thank you for establishing your covenant of grace. Amen.*

**Friday, July 8 Genesis 16:13-16**

*“The Lord has heard your cry of distress”*

 There is a strong tradition of lament in Scripture. From Hagar to Paul, the people of God have always lifted their cries, pleading for reprieve from their suffering. Were their cries unheard, we would have little hope that our own prayers and laments would be of concern to the Lord. But just as Scripture records their cries, it also tells of how God in his mercy responds to the pain of those who suffer. The angel assures Hagar that God is present to her suffering, and she names her son “Ishmael,” meaning “God hears.”

 There are times in our lives when we are tempted to remain silent. We believe that our sufferings are minor in comparison with others. We tell ourselves that God has more important matters to attend to. We simply don’t take the time to go to the Lord in prayer. Though we might convince ourselves that our silence is for the best, the truth is that the Lord welcomes our lament. Reliance on the Lord in all its forms is an act of worship. When we cry out to God, we witness to his love and concern for his people. We proclaim that he is present and active in our lives.

*Thank you, Lord, for hearing my cries. Amen.*

**Saturday, July 9 Psalm 33:18-19**

*“You are the God who sees me”*

 Having been assured of God’s concern for her suffering by the angel, Hagar calls upon God by the name *El-roi* or “the God who sees.” To be seen by God is to be known by him. God sees beyond the front that we display for others, knowing our hearts and minds at their deepest levels. He sees beyond the superficial idols we cling to, knowing that our deepest need is to be in relationship with him.

 Just as he sees our inner hearts, God also sees us in our sin. For some, this may seem like cause for fear, but Psalm 33 reminds us that the Lord “watches over those who fear him.” In Christ, we need not fear. He sees beyond our sinfulness, discovering the righteousness given to us as his brothers and sisters.

*Lord, I will rejoice in your sight. Amen.*