

Don't Flee From Difficulties

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of remembering where we come from, humbling ourselves, and submitting ourselves to God's will in order to receive His blessing.

Duration: 1:00:57

Scripture: Genesis 16:7, Hebrews 4:13

Topics: "Difficulties"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Hagar from the book of Genesis. He emphasizes the importance of letting go of the past and surrendering to God's will. The preacher highlights how Hagar, who was mistreated by her mistress Sarai, fled into the wilderness. However, the angel of the Lord found her and instructed her to return and submit to Sarai's authority. The preacher also mentions how the angel promised Hagar that her descendants would be numerous. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need to confront and reconcile with past mistakes in order to move forward in one's spiritual journey.

Transcript

Our text we find in the first book in the Bible, Genesis, chapter 16, from verse 7. Genesis, chapter 16, from verse 7. Last night when I was praying and asking the Lord what I should speak about today, I was looking, doing a study in numbers, some chapters there, but then somehow the Lord led me to this portion here in Genesis, the 7th verse. Now the angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going? And she said, I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress, Sarai.

Then the angel of the Lord said to her, return to your mistress and submit yourself to her authority. Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count. The angel of the Lord said to her further, behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son, and you shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has given heed to your affliction.

And he will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone will be against him. And he will live to the east of all his brothers. Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, Thou art a God who sees.

For she said, Have I even remained alive here after seeing him? Now the first point. The angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar. This is the first time where reference is made to the angel of the Lord.

The angel of the Lord. Now in the Old Testament, specifically, not in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament, where it's referred to the angel of the Lord, it is referred to the angel that has a divine nature. Not only just the God who we know as God the Father.

So not God the Father alone. But he is holy as God is holy. And he is like God.

So whenever it's referred to the angel of the Lord, it is believed that it is referring to Jesus himself. Being God himself. This angel is the Lord himself, revealing himself in a visible form.

Revealing himself to man. So they say this is Jesus himself before he was born in Bethlehem. Because he existed right from the beginning.

He had always been there. So he had always been. That's why when he was before the Pharisees and they said, but you aren't even 40 years old yet, how can you speak like this? You weren't even around then.

Then he answered and said, when Abraham saw me, he rejoiced in my day. So he had existed long before Abraham even came onto the scene. But the Pharisees and Sadducees didn't see that mystery.

So the angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar. And that was when she was in the wilderness of Shur. A barren, deserted place.

A dry desert with just sand all over. According to tradition, it was along the way where there was the well on the road going down to Egypt. Between Egypt and Palestine.

Approximately 240 kilometers. It must have been the road that led to her people, there where she came from originally. Down there in the south.

She was in great distress. A totally hopeless state. If the angel of the Lord hadn't appeared, she would have died there, all on her own, without any friends, without anyone to support her.

And the angel of the Lord asked her, he put this question to her, Hagar, where do you come from? And where are you going? And he is, so to say, waking her up out of her sleep, that drowsiness that had come over her. Almost as if she was under the influence of alcohol, she couldn't think straight. And he is now getting her back to reality, to get her thinking.

You probably know the story of Hagar, what had happened. She was Sarah's maidservant, Sarah Abrams' wife, had taken things into her own hand, out of the hands of God. She didn't wait upon the Lord, she took it into her own hands.

That's a terribly risky thing to do. If you take something that belongs to God, and you take it into your own hands. God had promised Abraham a son, and then they noticed how they were getting on in years, and they were quite old already.

And then she took things into her own hands, she couldn't wait upon the Lord. And that's the problem with us human beings, we cannot wait upon the Lord. That's a cursed thing.

We cannot wait upon the Lord. To wait is the most difficult thing, to wait upon the Lord. They are in such a hurry to serve God, to do things for God.

Then she said to her husband, take Hagar, my maid servant, as your wife. She can bear you a son. You women should be very careful what you say and what you do.

And how you act towards your husbands, and what you say to them. And when Hagar noticed that she was with child, she became proud and haughty. And she thought now she was greater than even her mistress.

And she looked down upon her. And who was it the one that suffered? It's that same woman who had this bright idea. And if you do the same, if you take things out of God's hands, and you start doing your own thing, thinking you know how it's done, you will be the one that suffers most and suffers first.

But you will then blame others for it, even Abraham. Abraham said to his wife, it's your maid servant, and after all it was your idea. So it's up to you, you can do what you think best.

But it just became more and more difficult. Totally, so difficult that she didn't know what to do anymore. It's like the Chinese when they write their word for fighting is two women under one roof.

And so it is when the devil comes in. And so Sarah made it totally impossible for Hagar. And she exerted authority more and more and just made it impossible for Hagar.

And you women know how to do it, you're far better at it than we men are. And she just made the situation totally impossible for her. But Hagar also had a problem that she was proud and haughty.

She also had a passion in her. Anger. Irritability, she was just full of it in her heart.

And she just couldn't bear it that she was being treated in this way. She was obstinate, stubborn, and that of course makes things just impossible. That is what drove Hagar.

She eventually got to the point where she decided the only way out of this is just to run away from the situation. Now that just, it's not just women that do things like that, some men are the same. When things get difficult, they just say well, I'm just going to run away from the situation.

She was driven by these hellish things to go it all alone, that long dangerous way. A woman, a young woman, living as a mad person. She just couldn't bear it that she was being treated in this way.

She just couldn't bear it that she was being treated in this way. She was prepared to go it all alone on this dangerous journey where there were many dangers. So to say, giving herself into death.

All that just because of her stubborn nature. And if it wouldn't have been for the angel of the Lord, she would have died alone. If he wouldn't have had mercy upon her, if he wouldn't have brought her mind back again to sanity.

To reflect, to bring to her mind where she came from and what her duty was. She was running away. And the angel of the Lord said, behold you're with child.

You shall bear a son. And he said, your son will be like a wild donkey, uncontrollable. And remember you woman, if you're with child, what you do, how you act and what you think influences that child.

Just like she was uncontrollable and in that state that she was in, in that time, it influenced her child. And so he was to become uncontrollable too. And in verse 12, he says, he will be a wild donkey of a man, like

a wild donkey, a wild ass.

His hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand will be against him. And if you think of what the angel of the Lord said, you think of her descendants and the descendants of Ishmael. Now they're living there in Iraq and Iran and in those areas, people who tie explosives to themselves and blow themselves up together with other people.

That's these descendants of this man. His hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand will be against him. He will be like a wild donkey, which you cannot control.

Now Hagar was not the only one that had made mistakes. Sarah had also made mistakes. She hadn't treated her well.

But even if someone else treats you unfairly, you have no right to leave God's way that he has for you. Even though you feel you're like a slave and it is a difficult situation, you have absolutely no right to forsake God's calling for your life. Before I continue, let me just direct this at you woman.

If you fail to serve God as you should and to listen to the Holy Spirit as you should, God will use your children to make life difficult for you. You need to be sanctified as your Heavenly Father is holy, so you need to be sanctified that you don't bring wild donkeys into this world. And so she meets with the angel of the Lord and the angel asks him, Hagar, where do you come from? And where are you going? This way that you're on, where is it taking you? There is no future for anyone in this world.

There is no future for you if you don't remember where you come from, from your past. There is no future for you if you don't remember where you come from. There is no future for you if you don't remember where you come from.

Maybe even a revival, but you cannot expect it if your past hasn't been sorted out, if you haven't thought of where you have come from. You can take it throughout the Bible, from this meeting with the angel of the Lord right through to the New Testament. Wherever there is a meeting with the angel of the Lord, with the Lord Jesus, He will always remind you of your past and take you through your past.

When the Lord met the Samaritan woman who asked Him for the water of life, Jesus put His finger on her past. For Jesus is the one who is now and who was and who will be in the future. You can say, oh well the past is behind me, I'm forgetting about the past.

You can say, oh well the past is behind me, I'm forgetting about it, I'm not going to bother about it, I'm just going forward. But you will get nowhere with the Lord Jesus if that's the attitude you have. Now you may say, well but Paul himself said, I forget what lies behind me and I stretch forward to what lies ahead.

Maybe you should do a study and see what Paul was actually referring to there. But you can be sure when you meet with Jesus, as many in the Bible experience, when they met with Him, He went through their past and asked, where have you come from? And the Samaritan woman said, Lord give me of that water and He said to her, go call your husband. She said, well I don't have a husband.

So He said, I say to you, you've had five already and the one you're living with doesn't belong to you either. If you claim that you met with Jesus and you didn't meet with your past, make sure what kind of a Jesus that is. It's not the one who's represented here in what for the first love.

says in the last times, there will be many Christs.

So you need to see which one is the one that you met with. Is it the God that sees? That sees everything? Those things you spoke in secret? That criticism? Those things where you slandered others? You say you're going forward, but the Lord says to you, where do you think you are going? Those who were here at the beginning of the revival, when we sought the Lord's face, and sought that he should start working in our midst. Do you remember how we went up and down over mountains, through valleys, looking at people to make right with them where we had wronged them? Do you remember how God worked in our lives at that time, so that he could work through us? You think you want revival? You won't get revival if you don't go through that.

You won't experience revival if you haven't done that. The Lord to fill you with the Spirit if you haven't remembered those things in the past, those things you said, those things you thought, and those things haven't been dealt with. You cannot expect God to give you his Spirit.

You will meet up with spiritual bankruptcy. Maybe not only spiritual, but bankrupt in many ways. God says, my blessing doesn't rest upon you.

Where do you come from? Go back where you come from and make right all the wrongs. If you want the blessing of the Lord for the future. Sarah has got no time to sit around the table and have peace talks.

You go and humble yourself. Sarah has got to face her own problems and her own sin. She wants the blessing of the Lord.

But that's none of your business. You make your life right. And if it's your life, it's your past, present, and future.

And submit yourself, humble yourself. Well, that's the crux of the matter. People will say, I'd rather die, I'd rather go to hell than humble myself.

And you will go to hell if you don't humble yourself. The most difficult thing for us, to humble ourselves. And there are many that are even called children of God.

They'd rather go to hell. The wrong way. The desert way.

Why is it so difficult to humble yourself? As we said, that was Hagel's problem. She was proud. Haughty.

A heart filled with passion, with anger. And that heart needs to be dealt with. It needs to be cleansed.

God needs to give you a new heart that is soft, that He can work through. I don't know whether you understand. But I say, may he who has an ear to hear, hear.

And remember, you will have to pay the price, not someone else. You will suffer. You will lose the blessing.

The difference is just that others will probably also be affected indirectly. Because they would have got converted through you. Those Sangomas, those witch doctors, those children.

They would have got converted through you and found Christ and found life through you. But because you didn't pay the price, they went lost. But their blood will be required of your hands.

Now, Hagar could have complained and said, but Lord, you don't understand. You don't realize what a predicament I'm in. Don't you realize what I've gone through? She just wanted to break me.

I couldn't take it any longer. And then you say, I'm not prepared that she breaks me. I'd rather run away.

Well, you can run, you wild donkey. That is uncontrollable. But you will also have an offspring.

There is one way that you humble yourself and that you go back to that place. And then you say, I'm not prepared that she breaks me. I'd rather run away.

Well, you can run, you wild donkey. But you will also have an offspring. And then you say, I'm not prepared that she breaks me.

But you will also have an offspring. And then you need to be alone with the Lord. And you say, oh Lord, through your spirit, reveal now to me where things went wrong in my life.

Remind me of those things in the past. Where I come from. Those lies that I told.

Those things I said which I shouldn't have said. Those things I did which I shouldn't have done. We have home.

We go to Pindele. Are you prepared to go back to that place where you come from and humble yourself? God sees your heart. He knows your heart.

But the future will show us whether you did that or not. Let's bow our heads and pray. Lord, take that iron and put it into the fire.

Till it's red hot. And then burn these words into our hearts that you spoke to Hagar. Where you said to her, Hagar, where have you come from? Where are you going to? And thereafter, even she said, you are the God who sees.

You saw how she had been at loggerheads with Sarah. You saw how she had fought with her. You saw how she had looked down upon her.

Now, Lord, today we don't pray for the whole world as such, but we pray for ourselves. When those people cried as you carried the cross, you said to them, cry not for me, but cry for yourselves and your children. Give us those tears, Lord.

Give us that cry. We pray it in your grace. Amen.

We'll ask the choir to sing. Let us pray. Lord, when you spoke, the people said, bless those breasts that nursed you, the womb that carried you.

And then you said, yes, but more blessed is the one who hears my words and does them. Lord, may we be people when we hear you speak that we will take to heart what you say, and then that we will then do what you have said. Grant us that grace, Lord.

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