

Why Does God Choose Some People, But Not Others?

- All right, good to see you all. Welcome, welcome, welcome. Best day of the week, Amen.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Hey, hey, hey, we're so glad to have you. And we're in a book of the Bible called Genesis. If you don't know the Bible, it's real easy, just open it, you're there, nailed it. First book of the Bible, Genesis, we're in chapter 21 and we are going through this book. And since about chapter 12, we've been looking at one family, Abraham and Sarah, one of the most significant families in the history of the world. And it's kind of a case study on marriage, parenting, and multi-generational family. But to catch you up to speed, when we started Genesis one and two, we realized that God made the world, and He made us, and everyone and everything was good and very good, everything was perfect. And then in Genesis three, sin entered the world. And so I was thinking about it, when God was finished with His work Genesis one and two, it was like this, everything was clean, pure, life giving, and then sin enters the world. And what we're seeing as we go through the book of Genesis, we're seeing what sin does when it gets into a marriage, when it gets into a family, when it gets into generations of a family legacy, when it gets into governments, and nations, and economies, and it infects and affects everyone and everything. And the whole point is ultimately that the promise is given that Jesus is coming to forgive sin and ultimately to extract sin from the world and to restore people and things back to God's original divine design. And so that's why we're studying Genesis to see what's gone wrong in the world, and then how in the world is God going to make it right? And as we're looking at this family, Abraham and Sarah, it is promised to them that they're gonna have a son. And they were unexpected of a son, she's beyond childbearing years, they've been married for a very long time, they've been barren and incapable of having children. And God made them the promise 25 years prior that a son is coming. And that through this son would come other sons, and through those sons would come the nation of Israel, and through the nation of Israel would come the son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ to deal with the sin problem. At this point in the story, they've been waiting 25 years. She's around 90, he's around a hundred, they're just about ready to start their family. If you're a parent of a young child and you think you're tired, just imagine that. You're 90 and you start nursing and he's 100, and he's changing his diaper and the baby's diaper, that's where they find themselves in the story. And so what we're gonna do, we're gonna look at this family story and system. And as we do, it's gonna give you an opportunity to examine your family. What kind of family did you grow up in? If you're married, what kind of marriage do you have right now? If you have kids or grandkids, what's your family like presently? And what Genesis does, it gives us this multi-generational case study in marriage and family. And for some of you, you're gonna realize that some mistakes were made, some sins were committed by those who came before you, or maybe even being done presently by yourself. And the big idea is this don't get bitter, get better. The point is, if you came from a great family, see how you can do even better. If you came from a rough family, see how you can make improvements. And what happens is when we're a kid, we don't really evaluate our family system. How many of you when you were a kid, you thought that adults knew what they were doing? You see, this was the assumption. When you're little you're, if your parents tell you something, you're like, well, they're

adults, they know what they're doing. How many of you have become an adult and you've changed your perspective on this? You realize we don't know what we're doing, they didn't know what they were doing. And it's an opportunity for us to evaluate our family of origins and our present family. So we're gonna jump right into the story. Genesis 21:1-7. And here's the good news, our God gives us promises. They've been waiting 25 years for God to fulfill the promise that a son was coming. And we're really excited to know that God fulfills promises, 'cause we're waiting a few more. We're waiting the promise of Jesus' second coming, the resurrection of the dead, the lifting of the curse, and no more presidential elections. There's a series of promises that we're all looking forward to, Amen. So here we go, "the Lord visited Sarah as He had said." Here's the good idea, God makes a promise, He always comes through. "And the Lord did to Sarah as he promised." So she's gonna be a mom. "And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son "in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him." They'd been waiting 25 years. "Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, "whom Sarah bore him, Isaac." God told him earlier, "name your son Isaac", and he does that. "Abraham circumcised his son when he was eight days old, "as God had commanded him." God set eighth day for the day of circumcision for the boys. "Abraham was a hundred years old "when his son was born to him." Just emotionally processed that for a moment. You're chasing a two year old and you're 102, that's where they're gonna be. "And Sarah said, 'God has made laughter for me.'" She's like, "you gotta be kidding me." "Everyone who hears will laugh over me. And she said, "who would've said to Abraham and Sarah "would nurse children?" So they had a supply chain issue, there was no baby formula, so Sarah's gonna nurse. "Yet I have born him a son in his old age." So the question is, what have you been waiting for? They waited 25 years for a son to be born. At this point, Abraham and Sarah have been married a very long time, as I said, he's 100 years of age. And in this 25 year journey to the birth of the son, they had some days that were filled with faith and others that were filled with fear. They are believers and they are walking with God, but their walk with God is not perfect. Some days it's a step forward, some days it's a step backward. This is how life is for God's people. On the days that they operated in faith, there was great blessing, on the days that they operated in fear, there was great burden. And the moral of the story is this, the more days you can stack up in faith, the better your life will be. And any days that you make major decisions in fear, they're going to be days of burden, not blessing. Well, Sarah here is 90 years of age. She hears this and she starts laughing. Previously in chapter 18:15, she laughed at God. God said, "you're gonna be a mom." And she's like, "oh, you're crazy." And he's like, "no, actually, I'm the Lord." And so what he does is he tells her, "name the child Isaac." Isaac means laughter, 'cause God gets the last laugh. So God says you're gonna be a mom, she laughs at God, God gives her a baby, laughs at her, every day she says the kid's name, she reminds herself God gets the last laugh, that's how it works. Now here's the big idea, it's okay to have a sense of humor, it's okay to laugh, it's okay to have a good disposition, laugh with God, don't laugh at God. When you laugh with God, you're sort of embracing the craziness that is your life. When you're laughing at God, you're mocking God. And so she transitions here from laughing at God to laughing with God. And commenting on this moment in history, Hebrews 11:11 and 12 in the New Testament, this section on people who live with extraordinary faith. It says, "by faith, "Sarah herself received power to conceive." The question is, how does an elderly barren woman who is beyond childbearing years have a child

by the power of God? It's not dissimilar to the story of Mary, Jesus's own mother. The question is she asked, "well, how does a Virgin "have a baby?" And she's told by the angel, "well, the power of God "will make this possible for you. That ultimately, she's going to conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit, God is going to get involved supernaturally. Even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised, therefore, for one man, Abraham, and him as good as dead. So he is a hundred years old. You ask like, "why did God pick a guy who was almost dead "to show that it's solely by God's power?" There's not one day Abraham would wake up and say, "look what I did", he's a hundred. He's like, "I don't do much." And so sometimes God waits to show that it's His power that's at work. "There were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven, "and as many as the enumerable grains of sand "on the seashore." Here's the big idea, do you know what God needs to do anything? Nothing, God can do anything, and all he needs is nothing. That's the story of Abraham and Sarah. We saw this earlier in Genesis where God made the heavens and the earth, created everything from nothing. Do you know what God needs? Nothing, that's really encouraging. 'Cause there are times in life where we realize like, "I don't have anything, "I don't have what is needed for the future." And God says, "I need nothing, "and with nothing, I can do anything." That's the goodness of our God, that's the hope of the story. Isaac is born, they've been waiting 25 years for him. And he's born into a home where he's got a brother. So to catch you up on the story, not every day in this 25 year journey was one of faith, there were days of fear. As I told you, when they made decisions out of fear, they brought burdens and not blessing to their marriage and family. So some years prior, when they had lost faith that God was going to provide this son, Isaac, Sarah came up with a really terrible idea. And that was, "why don't we get an additional wife?" And I'll just tell you this, two wives is too many. I'll just tell you that. So how many of you, if you knew that there was going to be two women who were both married to the same man and they both had sons, how many of you without even being a prophet, could look into the future and foresee trouble? That's what happens. So now they've got two wives and two sons. The other son's name is Ishmael. God didn't name him because he was not the son of the promise, Abraham named him. He was born 13 years prior. And at this point, Isaac is born, God names him, his name means laughter, 'cause he's the son of the promise, but it sets up the conflict in the home. On one side of the family, there is a lot of blessing, on the other side, there is a burden. And what's interesting here, is they name him Isaac which means laughter. What you see here is the pro-life heart of God and the word of God, that people who don't have a child, they're very distressed because children are a blessing and they wanna have children and family. This family has been in angst and anguish for 25 years, awaiting the coming of the promised son. For them, the lack of life is traumatic and devastating. In our day, it's the opposite. We're a culture of death, not of life. And for them, there is no choice. Choice between life and death, well who wouldn't choose life? And it's very interesting because they name the child Isaac, which means every day there's supposed to be laughter, and joy, and celebration over the bringing of this child into their family and into history. Compare and contrast that today with our culture of death. And I know we've got a big cultural debate going on right now about, you know, children in the womb, and it's just really tragic. Because the heart of God is that children are a blessing and that life comes from God and is a gift. So I just would encourage you, just be in prayer for our nation, be in prayer for our leaders, be in prayer for the conflict that is about to ensue at the

state level over the Roe v Wade issue that passed almost 40 years ago or 50 years ago now, I should say. And I was thinking about it this week. Thursday, I was gonna take a day and hike, and I just felt compelled in the spirit to write on the issue of abortion and life, look at history, look at the scriptures, look at the medical evidence. And I sat down for 14 hours straight and I wrote a 25,000 word book on abortion. And so we're editing it now and we'll give it away for free. There'll be no publishers, so you can't cancel it, there's no endorsement, so there's no one to attack. And if you have a complaint, we have a team standing by ready to delete your email, feel free to send it. But here we see a child comes, and it's a blessing. But for them, is it an inconvenience? Yeah, when you're 90 and 100, everything's an inconvenience. Let alone the birth of a child. And what he does then, Abraham circumcises his son on the eighth day as God had instructed him. And to this day, 4,000 years later, Jewish people are still doing the same. And how many of you find it curious that God says, "circumcise him on the eighth day." It's like, that's odd, why the eighth day? Well, what's really interesting is, if you give time, eventually science and archeology catches up with the Bible. And so what we have found now is that there are two things in your body that are most helpful in clotting of blood so that if you undergo anything that is medical, you don't bleed out. Number one is vitamin K, number two is prothrombin. Neither of these are present in the body of a newborn baby sometimes up until the seventh day. But the highest day during your entire life that you have these two blood clotting mechanisms in your body is, guess which day? The eighth day. In 1943, two scientists researched all of this. Here they are, and they were given the Nobel prize in medicine for proving what was already in Genesis. So I think they did great work, but we could have saved them all a lot of time if they just read Genesis 21. What they discovered was the eighth day of your life, is the best day of your life to undergo anything that is medical or surgical. If you were to have a child be circumcised prior, they would bleed to death, but that's the best day of your whole life. The point is this, God always knows exactly what he's doing. And we trust him by faith until we see it by sight or we prove it by science. Here, they're holding their baby boy and everything is good but as I told you, there are now two wives and two sons, which is too many. And so what we're gonna see next is a lot of baby mama drama. This is, this is the Hebrew hood right here, friends. It's gonna get, it's gonna get real. I mean, there's gonna be blood tests, and Jerry Springer is gonna have to get in the middle, it's gonna be a situation. So Genesis 21:8-14, "and the child", that is Isaac, "grew up and was weaned." "And Abraham made a feast on the day that Isaac was weaned." So in that culture, when you would wean a child, you would celebrate. And I'm guessing Sarah was really happy for this day. She's around 93. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, whom she had born to Abraham, laughing. "So she said to Abraham, 'cast out this slave woman "with her son.'" Sarah doesn't hold Hagar and her son in high regard, she never names them, she just categorizes them, that slave woman and her son. "'For the son of the slave woman "shall not be heir with my son, Isaac.'" "And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham "on account of his son." And he's originally Hebrew, he's very emotional, he's very upset, this troubles and bothers him. "But God said to Abraham, 'be not displeased "because of the boy and because of your slave woman, "whatever Sarah says to you, do what she tells you. "For though Isaac shall, through Isaac rather, "shall your offspring be named. "And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman", and that's Ishmael through Hagar, "because he is your offspring. "So Abraham rose early in the morning." probably didn't

get a lot of sleep that night. "Took bread and skin of water." Probably a few gallons, 'cause that's all they could carry. "And gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder "along with the child and sent her away. "And she departed and wandered "in the wilderness of Beersheba." Alright, let me say what had happened. He married Sarah. God said, "I'm gonna give you a son." They waited some years, they lacked faith, they operated and reacted in fear. They had gone down to Egypt, not where God had told them to go, and God had to deliver them from that place they shouldn't have been there in the first place. When they departed Egypt, they took with them this girl, Hagar. Now she is a maid servant working for Sarah. Sarah comes up with the idea, "Abraham, why don't you marry her "and then have a child with her, "and that'll be the way that we get our son." Now God has fulfilled his promise, and now he has two wives, he has two sons, he has a major conflict under his roof. And what's really curious in our day, we are seeing a cultural push toward polygamy and they're rebranding it 'cause Satan went to college and got a marketing degree. So now they're calling it throuples, which makes me want to throuple up in my mouth. And so what happens is, In our culture, there's this constant push toward polygamous marriage. And if we can't define, we can't even define a man and a woman. And just so you know, the Adams apple is a clue. But we're in this day when people are trying to redefine marriage. And you're gonna continue to see this push in the culture toward polygamy. And you're gonna even see people who say that they're Christians, but they'll say, "well, people in the Bible "committed polygamy." Yeah, and it was a disaster every single time. Let me just tell you this, people do things in the Bible 'cause they're stupid and the things don't work, and they write them down so that we don't do them, not that we're so stupid to go, "well, it's in there, I'll do it." No, you know, Judas hung himself, don't get a rope. You know, there's stuff in there, there's stuff in there as a warning, okay? There's stuff in there as a warning. And so this is a terrible idea. We saw in Genesis one and two, God made us male and female, God brought the first man and woman together, God officiated the first wedding, and marriage is one man, one woman in a covenant that is consummated, that's marriage. Every time they deviate from that, great pain happens for generations. Well here, what we literally have in Abraham's house, we have division. Division literally means two visions. Jesus says that a house divided cannot stand, it's gonna fall down. So he's got Hagar and Ishmael unbelieving, He's got Sarah and Isaac believing. One man, two wives, two sons. Sarah has a vision. Her vision is, "my son is the son of the promise. "He will receive the inheritance and the blessing. "And he was born to be the first born son. "I'm the first wife, and he will be the first born son." Now Hagar's vision is different. She's like, "actually, my son was born first, "13 years before your son. "My vision is that I will displace you, "and my son, Ishmael "will be the son of the covenant and the promise, "he'll inherit all of the real estate, "all of the business and all of God's covenantal blessing." Major conflict, division. Abraham is torn and stuck in the middle. And what is happening here is that the older son who is 16, he's picking on the younger son who is three. So Ishmael here is 16 years of age. We were told prior in Genesis 16:12, God said, "he would be a wild donkey of a man." Any of you have a pet donkey? How about a wild donkey? Nobody likes a wild donkey, they're impossible. They will kick you, they will bite you, they will headbutt at you, they will run at you, they will spit at you. He's now 16 years old, he's gonna be tough to parent. As soon as a boy gets something that looks like the beginning of a possible beard, his voice drops and he's taller than his mother, his ears close, he can't hear anything. They're hard to parent. At this

point, we just found all the mothers of teenagers. It was an awkward laugh. Come back mom, join me. Okay, so he's 16 and he's gonna be a wild, he's not a kid who takes correction well. And here you've got the three year old brother. The 16 year old is picking on the three year old. He's mocking him, he's bullying him at his own party in front of his friends and family. Ishmael is not a great big brother, he's kind of a bad kid. But what is interesting, Sarah gets really upset at Ishmael for mocking her son, but previously she had mocked God. So she's angry at Ishmael for doing to her son what she did to her God. Since they grew up in the same household, it makes you wonder if he didn't learn how to mock from her. And here's the big idea, sometimes the children in our house do things that we do and it makes us very upset. It's called hypocrisy, okay? So, and sometimes it doesn't bother us when we say or do something, but when our kids do it, it really bothers us. That's Sarah, she's like, "well, it's okay for me to mock God, "but you can't mock my son." And what's gonna happen here is that Ishmael is a wild donkey of a man. And you're gonna see this with Isaac. Understandably so to some degree, Sarah really loves him, but she over mothers him. He's kind of over mothered, he becomes a real soft kid. Well, not Ishmael, so she gazes into the future. What happens if the 16 year old keeps pounding on the three year old? This is going to be a crisis. And so what happens is, this comes to a boiling point that ends in an explosion. And it happens here in this public event of the feast of the weaning. And so what happens is, Abraham is left with a loose, loose set of options, okay. Does he, does Abraham love Sarah? As far as we can tell. Does Abraham love Hagar? Doesn't really seem like it. Does Abraham love his son Isaac? Yes he does, does he love his son Ishmael? He really does. He's raised this boy for 16 years. He loves him, it's his son. I've got a 16 year old son, he's our youngest child. I could not imagine looking at him at 16 and saying, "son, good luck with the rest of your life, leave." And being done with it. I just can't even, I can't even imagine the father wound that that would create, and the brokenness that that would create for generations. So Abraham has to decide, Sarah and Isaac or Hagar and Ishmael. God has told him, Sarah and Isaac, that's the line of the promise. So he knows what decision to make, but in his heart he can't make it. But the conflict between these two women and their sons is escalating so painfully and so rapidly that they can't live under the same roof, right? How many of you, imagine you got a divorce and remarried and your ex still lived with you. That's a haunted house, okay? That's a haunted house. That's where they are. And so what God says is, "Abraham, you can't make the decision, "we're gonna let Sarah make the decision." This is an opportunity for Sarah to bless, and she doesn't. And what she says is, "they're gone." Now, here's what we know, Abraham's very wealthy. She could have said, "why don't we set them up somewhere else "and just let them move on with their life." We learned earlier in the book that Abraham has 318 mercenary soldiers raised in his house. She could have said, "you know, she comes from Egypt. "why don't we get her a military escort back to her parents, "her father's house, why don't we set her up financially, "take care of her and the son, "and you know, set them up for a better future?" She could have said, "well, we've got, you know, "I don't know how many thousands, "but we've got the nation of Israel, "why don't we pick a spot far away, set her up, "make sure she's tucked away and taken care of? "We can't live together, "but let's do all we can to bless them." She could have done any number of things, and instead, she just gets bitter and she punishes, she puts no grace on it. Let me say this was 4,000 years ago. And I'll explain it in more detail in a few moments, but there's still a bitter family feud 4,000 years later between

these two women and their sons. Between these two women and their sons. So ultimately they are sent away. And then here's where we find the story. Our God does bless Genesis 21:15-21. "When the water in the skin was gone." So we live in the desert, they're in the desert. We know what it, when you run outta water, we know what that means. "She put the child under one of the bushes "then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, "about the distance of a bowshot "before she said, "'let me not look on the death of my child.'" Just emotionally enter into this. She's like, "this is the day that we die "in the desert of dehydration." You know how painful that is? She said, "I can't watch my son die." "He's 16, he's strong, he's young. "This is the day that he dies, and I can't watch him die." So you sit there, son in the shade, I'll go over here. "And she sat opposite of him, "she lifted up her voice and wept." She is broken, she is devastated, she's wrecked. She's just sobbing alone in the wilderness. And God heard the voice of the boy. His name Ishmael means God hears. That's what his name means, and here God hears the voice of the boy. "And the angel of God," who I believe is Jesus Christ, "called to Hagar from heaven "and said to her, 'what troubles you Hagar? Fear not.'" Number one command on the Bible, appears more than anything else. "Fear not for God has heard the voice of the boy "where he is. "Up, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand "for I will make him into a great nation." The Bible says that God will be a father to the fatherless. Ismael is now fatherless and God will be with him. "Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water." Big debate is, was it already there and He led her to it, or did He supernaturally provide it? "And she went and filled the skin with water "and gave the boy a drink. "And God was with the boy, and he grew up. "He lived in the wilderness, became an expert with the bow. "He lived in the wilderness of Paran "and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt." So Hagar was Egyptian nonbeliever. When it comes time for her son to take a wife, he doesn't take a believing wife, he takes an unbelieving wife. Again, this is a very divided family. Half is believing, half is unbelieving. Hagar and her son are unbelieving, Sarah and her son, Isaac, they are believing. So she goes and gets a wife for him from Egypt. And so where we see this now is that the story begins here with Hagar completely hopeless, desolate, and alone. And it says the angel of the Lord appeared to her. I've got it in the study guide, you can get a free copy on the way out, or you can find it @realfaith.com. But when an angel of the Lord shows up, it usually is an angel. Angel means messenger, that's literally what it means. When the angel of the Lord shows up, it's usually Jesus Christ coming down from heaven, making a cameo appearance. He had already appeared to her one time prior in Genesis:16. And Jesus comes again here to meet with her. There's a corollary story in the New Testament with a woman from Samaria, she's the woman at the well. She's dejected and rejected, she's outcast, and alone, and isolated, and Jesus sits with her at a well, comforts her, loves her, serves her, blesses her. Hagar here is kind of like the woman at the well on the Old Testament. The good news is this, even if no one cares about you, Jesus still does. Even if no one is with you, Jesus still is. Even if no one hears you, Jesus still listens. Everyone has abandoned her, but not Jesus. And here's the crazy idea, there's no evidence that Hagar and her son ever converted, but they're still blessed. Here's the big idea, our God is so good that He blesses people who don't even know Him. And this is what's really amazing to me in this story, the only person who's good to everybody is Jesus. Sarah is not good to everybody, Abraham's not good to everybody, Ishmael is not good to everybody. Jesus is good to everybody 'cause He is good. And so what we see here is that this

young man, Ishmael, he's got a father wound, he's rejected. I mean, just imagine at 16, your dad left you to die in the wilderness. He grows up to be an expert, it says with the bow. What that means is he's good at hunting and fighting, right? He's a hunter and he's a mercenary. He's a kid doesn't need anybody or anything. You drop him in the middle of the woods, he's gonna figure it out. If he's hungry, he'll kill it and eat it. And if you fight with him, it's a bad day for you. He is just that strong, rugged, independent, tough minded kid. Today, the Arab people descend from him. Now you wonder why there's a conflict between the Jewish people, and the Christians, and the Arabs. It's an old family feud that goes back some 4,000 years. And it comments on this in Romans:9. And looking back, it's in the context of why does God choose some people but not others? And that's the theme of our sermon today. And the title is, "Does God Choose Some People But Not Others?" It says this in Romans 9:11 and 12. Speaking of this event, "though they were not yet born "and had done nothing either good or bad, "in order that God's purpose of election might continue "not because of works, but because of him who calls, "she was told the older will serve the younger." What usually happens is that the one who is born first is the one that God works through. But in this instance, God works through Isaac 'cause he's the son of the promise, not Ishmael, even though he was born first, he doesn't get the legal position of first born. And here's the big idea, is one side of the family good and the other side of the family bad? No, they both are bad. They both have got some problems, some real brokenness, some sin and rebellion. And it's not like God works with the good people and not the bad people, all God has to choose from is the bad people and the bad people. And God chooses to work through these bad people. And he still blesses these bad people, so he is good to everybody. But the point is this, it's a series and succession of generations of failures until Jesus comes through this crazy family, and he's the only one who doesn't fail. And so ultimately it's not about this family, it's about getting Jesus into human history. Well, what happens, God tells both of them that their sons will become nations. And so Isaac is gonna grow up and have the 12 tribes of Israel that become the nation of Egypt. Ishmael is gonna grow up, he's gonna have 12 sons, they become the Arab nations. So you have, from these two sons, nations, and God bless both as he promised he would. The physical descendants are quite extraordinary actually. There are, find it in my notes here, in our day, 436 million Arabs who descend from Ishmael. In addition, there are 15 million Jews that descend from Isaac. From these two sons come three major world religions. Many of the Arabs, there are Arabs who do know and love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. But the predominant religion in the Arab world among the descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, are Muslim. So there are 1.9 billion Muslims on the earth. It's the fastest growing religion on the earth. At current rates, Islam will be the largest religion on our planet by 2060. In addition, there are 2.4 million Orthodox Jews and 2.4 billion Christians who would be the descendants of Abraham spiritually. And so what you have is global geopolitical crisis. If you ever wonder why, why do Muslims not like Jews and Christians? It's an old family feud. It's an old family feud. Well, why is there a fight over the promised land? Well, because the question is, that these members of the family or these members of the family have the inheritance right to the land of promise. And so what's really interesting is, here God provides a well, and it is believed that Ishmael settled in that same region of the well, and in that same region, around 570 AD, one of his descendants was born a man named Muhammad, who's the founder of Islam. So lemme just kind of take in a little historical continuum. So

Abraham was 4,000 years ago. So 2000 years after this story, Jesus Christ comes. 570 years after that, Muhammad is born. Now we have 2000 years removed from the birth of Jesus, 4,000 years removed from the birth of Isaac. Muhammad is born as a descendant of Ishmael in the exact same area as this well. He then founds Islam, and here's what happens in the Quran. The Quran would be the book for the Muslims, the Bible would be the book for God's people. They take the stories and they invert them so that Hagar is the chosen wife and Ishmael is the chosen son. And so they rewrite all of history. It's gonna come up shortly, where Abraham is told by God to sacrifice Isaac. In the Quran, they rewrite the story that God told Abraham to sacrifice Ishmael. All the stories are, they flip Sarah out, they flip Hagar in, they flip Isaac out, they flip Ishmael in, and they change the story. And what happens then, is not only do they believe that Ishmael and Mohamed settled in the place of the well, today, it's a place you may have heard of, it's called Mecca, same place. Within the walls of Mecca, there's the well. This is the well that God provided for Ishmael. 4,000 years later, it's still flowing. Those who are in Islam will take a pilgrimage, it's called the Hajj. It's a ritual pilgrimage that they'll take every year. They'll go to Mecca, and they will reenact their version of this story. They will say that Hagar ran between two hills seven times, and then God supernaturally caused a spring to erupt under the feet of Ishmael. So they will reenact that, and then they will go and draw water. This is for them, a sacred place. They will then drink the water, they will take the water home as a memorial. If you were raised Catholic, this is their version of holy water. If you've ever been to a wishing well, this is their version of a wishing well, this is where you come and you give God your requests. What's really interesting, we know exactly where this is, and they have conducted tests on the water and they have come to the conclusion that it is the purest and healthiest water on planet earth. Those are the non-Christian scientists. It has high percentage of bicarbonates and calcium, it has incredible medicinal and healing properties and it is considered the most valuable healing and significant water source on planet earth, okay? Here's what I'm telling you, as we're reading things in Genesis, you wonder, did these people live? Yep. Did these places exist? Yep. Did these things happen? Yes, yes. 4,000 years later, 1.9 billion physical descendants of Ishmael. Now just hear me in this, he starts as a 16 year old homeless, broke, rejected, fatherless kid dying of starvation in the wilderness, and God says, "I'll make him into a nation." 4,000 years later, 1.9 billion people reading the Quran, seeing him as their physical and spiritual father, make a pilgrimage to drink his water. Let me ask you this, do you think that Abraham intended any of this to happen? Do you think one day he's like, "well, I got a wife, "I'll take another wife, I'll sleep with them both, "and 4,000 years later, I will create geopolitical crisis, "wars, multiple religions, "at a pretty staggering body count." Do you think that that's what he intended? No. Here's the big idea, you and I, when we sin, we don't intend all the consequences. And it's just amazing here, all of this happens because one man goes to bed with two women. See, I think it's stupid, and we're like, people are like, "we're consenting adults, nobody gets hurt." A lot of people get hurt. You and I, when we make decisions, we tend to not think in terms of legacy, we tend to not think in terms of generations. Abraham didn't. So here's what I wanna, I wanna flip and talk about this. So in this story, there's a lot of conflict between Hagar and Sarah. There's gonna be conflict between Isaac and Ishmael. And you could look at all of this conflict and this family drama, and you could say, "gosh, well, "how can we get Sarah to be nicer? "And how can we get Ishmael to not pick on his brother?" Or we could pull back and

ask, "what kind of family did Abraham architect?" See, sometimes we get so busy living in our life and our family, that we don't evaluate and look at our life and family. Oftentimes, the problems in the family are because of the architecting of the family. Did Abraham as head of household architect this family for conflict? Absolutely. Did he architect it for division? Absolutely. So that's what I wanna talk about. First thing that we all need to learn, is how to architect our life, and then we can figure out how to architect our family. You and I would never move into a home that wasn't architected. Like some of you are in the process of moving right now. Let's say you go to a home showing this week. You say, "well, tell me about the house." They're like, "well, you know, we didn't really get permits "and we didn't call any engineers, "and we didn't have an architect, "and the guy who built this really never built anything. "And as he found stuff, "he just brought it home and kind of put it together. "So you ready to buy?" Answer, "no, if it's not architected, "I'm not moving into it." You would never move into a house that is not architected, but most people move into a life that is not architected. Like, well, what's your plan? I don't know. What are you trying to build for a life and a legacy? I don't know, I just kinda live in it. I just, I kind of bring home whatever I got and kind of stick it together and hope it works out. Abraham did not well-architect his family. Here's, let me pull a few themes from Genesis. A few things that will start to architect your life. Number one, you walk with God. We learned earlier in Genesis, it says that Adam walked with God, that Enoch walked with God, that Noah walked with God, that Abraham walked with God, not perfectly. And when they venture outside of God's will, horrible things happen. But the first thing is, how's your walk with God? And your walk with God is very, very practical. It's the daily getting up, talking to the Lord before you talk to anybody else, reading God's word before you flip on your phone, right? Get some good news before you get all the fake news. And then it's through the course of the day, being cognizant of the presence of God and inviting God into all your practical decision making. And sometimes we think, well, it's just a little decision. Well, lemme tell you, sometimes the little decisions are the big ones. In addition to your walk with God, then it is architecting your schedule, your life, in such a way that honors God. We looked in Genesis one and two, seven day a week, six days of work, one day of Sabbath and rest. God wants you to have your walk with him, set your heart. He wants your schedule to be devoted to him. He wants you to work for six days, the new covenant says he doesn't care what day you take off, but God wants you to take a day off. Rest, sleep in, catch your breath, recover, right? It says literally in Genesis that in six days God breathed out, and on the seventh day, God breathed in. That's literally what it says. Do you know what we do Six days a week? On the seventh day, recover rest. This is where people will even say, I just need to catch my breath. They're echoing God in Genesis. So your heart should be devoted to the Lord for your walk with God, your schedule should be devoted to the Lord, and then your budget should be devoted to the Lord. We saw this, I think it was in Genesis:14, a guy named Melchizedek comes out, he's a priest, and Abraham gives a 10th, tithe literally means a 10th. And he tithes to Melchizedek, he tithes to God. The point is this, your walk with God establishes your heart. Your schedule, and then your budget, if they are devoted to the Lord, if God gets your heart, if he gets your schedule and gets your budget, guess what? You're gonna start to have your life architected well. it's when God doesn't have your heart, God doesn't make it in your schedule, and God isn't a priority in your budget, two things are gonna happen. You're not going to architect a good life, and he's not going to bless the life that you

architect. In addition, once you've got your life architected, then you get married and it's about architecting your marriage and family. And we saw this in Genesis 2:24. God tells us exactly the principles. I'll read it to you, and it's the law of priority, the law of pursuit, the law of partnership and law of purity. We looked at this in Genesis two and we'll revisit it briefly. At Genesis 2:24, this is before sin enters the world, this is where everything is still good and very good, this is God's divine design. And here's what God says if you wanna architect a marriage, you wanna architect a family, you wanna architect a legacy, here are the design principles. "A man shall," so it starts with a man being first and foremost responsible. In marriage and family, there's singular headship, plural leadership. The husband and wife are leaders, but the husband is the head, which means he is firstly responsible for the wellbeing of the members of the family. And it's a man, it's a man taking responsibility for himself. A man shall number one, leave his father and mother. That's the law of priority. Number two, hold fast to his wife, that's the law of pursuit. Three, become one flesh, that's the law of partnership. And four, it says, "and the man and his wife were both naked or the Texas international version, "naked, "and they were not ashamed," that's the law of purity. And here's what God says, "here are the four divine design architecting principles "for life and marriage." If you violate any of these, you're going to hurt yourself, okay? Here's what I'll tell you. Whether you believe in gravity or not, guess what? It exists. Now at some point, every little boy doesn't believe that it does. So he tries to defy gravity and he realizes gravity is undefeated. Gravity exists, and if you don't honor it, it'll hurt you. God similarly has laws for architecting marriage and family. And if you violate those, they still exist and you hurt yourself. So let's examine the decision making of Abraham's life by God's four architecting principles for marriage and family. And let me say this, the times that he obeys, he is blessed, the time that he disobeys, he and his family are burdened. So number one, the law of priority, leave your mother and father. So this means you become an independent, differentiated adult. You're no longer their child, you're an adult, you start to make your own decisions. God told Abraham starting in Genesis 12, "leave your mother and father." Did he do that? Did he do that? Yes or no?

- [Congregant] Yes.

- Yes. But he took with him one relative, a guy named Lot, who is a nephew. He didn't leave his whole family, he took his nephew with him. So he's blessed when he obeys and leaves his mother and father, but he's burdened because he takes a family member with him who becomes a real trouble. So it works when he obeys, and it doesn't when he disobeys. In addition, the second law, the law of pursuit says to hold fast, some of your translations will say to cleave to your wife, this is an active pursuit. If you are married, the husband should be pursuing his wife physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, devoted to her, making it his aim and ambition to connect with her. This is why the Bible says in the New Testament, the demand should be a one woman man, all of his energy, one woman, that's it, okay? In this law of pursuit, did Abraham actively pursue his wife? Some days yes, some days no. They are married for a very long time, but twice he gives her away. In addition, he does pursue her and then he gets another wife and he pursues her as well. On the times that he pursued Sarah, there was blessing, on the times that he didn't pursue Sarah or pursued someone other than Sarah, it was a burden. Third

priority, the law of partnership. There are to be one, there are to be one. That is a consummated covenant. Are Abraham and Sarah one? Yes, until there's another one. It's supposed to be one, not pick up another one. He's violating this sacred law of partnership. The times that he is one with Sarah, their life is blessed. The times that he is not pursuing Sarah, they're burdened. Number four, the law of purity. It says that they would be naked without shame. Abraham and Sarah are naked without shame. When they are, God blesses them, their life is good. There are times that he is naked with another woman, that is shameful, and that becomes a burden. The point is this, everything good in Abraham's life is when he architected his life, his marriage, and his family according to God's divine design and priority principles. All of the burdens in his life for his family, that affect his family 4,000 years later, are the times that he violated God's divine design and His principles for life architecting. So what I want you to do, I want you to look at the family you grew up in and just evaluate, did we obey or disobey God's divine design and His planning priorities? And every family is gonna have pains, problems, and perils. Do you know what's crazy? This is one of the greatest couples in the history of the world. Did they have some bad days? Oh, for sure. Okay, the point is this, God was gracious, and God was generous, and God was present, and our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

- [Congregant] Amen.

- But at the end of the day, I don't want you to look at the family you grew up in, or maybe even the marriage and family you have, and just get bitter, I want you to get better. To ask, "okay, okay, what, what did we do right that's good, "what did we do wrong that's gotta change?" So that we don't carry forth generational legacy of curse. Now let me say something that's going to go from preaching to meddling, if I'm not already there, we've officially arrived at that point in the sermon. Was this family poorly architected before it exploded? Yeah. Was there a lot of pain in this family that was because of poor leadership and architecting before it exploded? Yes. What caused it to explode? A teenager. This is, Genesis isn't just about what happened, it's about what always happens. A poorly architected family has pains, problems, and perils until the kids reach the teen years, and then it explodes.

- [Congregant] Amen.

- Here is, Pray for that guy, okay. So Ishmael is 16. It's not working, every day the check engine light is on for this family. Every day there's smoke coming out from the hood, every day they're push starting this family. And then one day it seizes up. And what happens on those moments where a family explodes or implodes, everybody's like, "I don't know what happened all of a sudden." No, no, no, no, no. It was poorly architected and it was painful for a very long time, and then one day it just exploded or imploded. One more thing to meddle. Underlying, the problem in this family is favoritism. This is going to become a theme through the remainder of Genesis. If parents play favorites, families explode or implode. Okay, who's Sarah's favorite? Isaac. Who's Hagar's favorite? Ishmael. Who's Abraham's favorite? He's torn. Now, if you're here with your mom, don't raise your hand. But how many of you grew up in a home where like, well, they were dad's and I was mom's, okay? That's division. "And a house divided can't stand", Jesus says. It

explodes or implodes. The problem in this family is they have favorites. Sometimes in a family, you know, one parent will pick one of the children to be their favorite 'cause they were born first so you've known them the longest. Sometimes you pick one 'cause they're like, you they're like me, they're cute, they're amazing, they're so easy to hang out with. Sometimes you don't like that kid, you're like, "they're like me." Sometimes you like the kid 'cause they're like your spouse, they look like them. You're like, "I like my spouse, "they look like my spouse, I like them too." Is it a sin to play favorites? It is, because what it does, it turns the siblings against each other. So here it's Isaac versus Ishmael, but ultimately it's a poorly architected family. If they weren't playing favorites, these boys wouldn't be having this conflict. Some of you grew up in a home where there was a lot of conflict, there was a lot of drama, there was a lot of intrigue, there was a lot of division. Two questions, was the family poorly architected, and did the parents play favorites? That's what happens here. So we wanna learn from this. I've got five kids and I hope they would all say, "dad didn't have any favorites." I have five favorites. You need to love, and some kids are easier to love. Some kids are a little more work. Ishmael, he's a wild donkey of a man, there's gonna be some work. Isaac, he's a mama's boy. Every kid's got their personality, their strengths, their weaknesses, their differences. But here's the big idea, we need to be the parent that they need, not the parent that we want to be for our convenience. And this playing of favorites, and this poorly architecting a family, it leads to 4,000 years of pain. Let me say a few things as we wrap up. For those of you who are younger, right? The earlier you start to architect your life, the better off you'll be. Those of us who are a little older, we would say, "man, I wish I would've had a plan for my finances, "I wish I would've had a plan for my soul, "I wish I would've had some wisdom earlier." If you're young, start. We've got a whole generation that's not even getting married until they're 30 plus. They're violating all of God's divine design principles. Just dating, relating, fornicating, living together, and then just move, you know, hoping it works out, and it doesn't. So don't, you know, don't be conformed to the pattern of this world, be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Say, you know what, okay, what does it look like for me to architect my life as a single person? What does it look like for me to then architect our marriage and then me to architect our family with my spouse someday? For those of you who are young and you've got a young family, you're in the little years, let me just tell you, don't get legalistic. Tools, not rules, be flexible, pivot as you need to. Your every year is different, every kid is different. You're not gonna get it right every time, God's gonna give you grace and you're gonna need it. For those who are older like me, and your kids are grown. We're down to, my oldest daughter graduated from high school on Friday, we're down to, you know, one under roof here very soon. Let me tell you something very powerful that you can say to your kids, "I'm sorry." Now that I see some decisions we made and the way we set things up, man, I wish I would've said that differently, I wish I would've done that differently, I apologize, would you please forgive me? Our kids don't expect us to be perfect, but it's really helpful if we're honest about the times that we weren't perfect. It would do a lot of healing. See, Ishmael never got that. Sarah never came back and said, "I'm so sorry." So 4,000 years later, it's still a bitter family feud. There could have been some healing if some grace was put on it. And the goal, this friend, is the hope and the prayer is that every generation would just take a step forward, a little better, right? My mom and dad are here. Where they started, they took a step forward and they set us up better. And I'm blessed by my mom and dad. And now my hope is to set our kids up so

they're blessed and a little better. And I hope when the grandkids come, they're multiple steps ahead of me. And the goal is just by the grace of God, to have generational legacy and momentum. See, we don't think about that. We're just like, "hey, let's kill our kids "and rack up debt and hand it to those who live." That's America, it's foolishness, it's not wisdom. This will be an opportunity for you to maybe meet with the Lord and forgive some people in your life that have made some decisions that have caused some pain. This is a time, if you're here with your spouse, maybe to say, I'm sorry for a few things, maybe to tell your kids, "oh gosh, please forgive me, "I wish I would've done this differently." And if you have parents that did some things right, say thanks. If you had parents, say thanks. If there are some things that you've received that were a blessing and not a burden, be grateful. I can just feel it in the room. You need to meet with the Lord, that's all I've got to say. Father, thank you for an opportunity to teach the scriptures and God I thank you that you are good to everyone in the story, and that you're the same today, and you're the same tomorrow, and that's the same God you were yesterday. God, sometimes sin infects and effects marriage and family. Sometimes the place that it is felt most deeply, is by the people that we love most deeply. God, I thank you for this honest, raw life story, as we've examined now, 25 years of Abraham and Sarah. And God, I pray for our own families that we would learn from whatever was good, that we would grow through whatever was bad. God, I pray that we would honor your design principles for marriage and for family, and God, as you met with them, would you just come and meet with us right now. For those who need to process, help them to process, for those who need to forgive, help them to forgive, for those who need to reconcile, help them to reconcile, for those who need to change, help them to change. God, we pray for this family, this church family, over which you are our Father, that you would meet with us right now and help us to have a walk with you that includes our spouse, and our kids, and our grandkids, that there would be a parade into the kingdom of people in our family, in Jesus name, Amen.