

Life Group Notes 2/9/2025

Pastor Mark Warren

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time.

– Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

Please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group.

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 2/9. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. ***The purpose is to minister to one another.*** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnote speaks:

1. On Abraham and God's promise of offspring.

Important: At the very end of these notes, I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

Pastor began by saying, "I'm seeing and I'm hearing that you said, 'Yes!' to Him."

1. Go over what you've seen and heard in the last six weeks.
2. We began with what the desert means, and then we studied Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness, then looked at Moses, then David and the need for integrity, and then finally we looked at the Israelites and their time of wandering. What do you remember?
3. Have you said, "Yes!" to Him? What results have you seen? He begins the message asking, "Are there moments in your life where you have felt pushed out and abandoned? You lost your job. You found yourself in a desolate place you had never dreamed of."
 - 1. Do you have a testimony?
 - 2. How did you respond?
 - 3. What have you learned?

Look up the story of Hagar beginning in Genesis 16:

1 Now Abram's wife Sarai had borne him no children, but she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "Look now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go to my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

3 So after he had lived in Canaan for ten years, his wife Sarai took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to Abram to be his wife. 4 And he slept with Hagar, and she conceived. But when Hagar realized that she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.

5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be upon you! I delivered my servant into your arms, and ever since she saw that she was pregnant, she has treated me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me." 6 "Here," said Abram, "your servant is in your hands. Do whatever you want with her." Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she fled from her.

7 Now the angel of the LORD found Hagar by a spring of water in the desert—the spring along the road to Shur. 8 "Hagar, servant of Sarai," he said, "where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I am running away from my mistress Sarai," she replied.

9 So the angel of the LORD told her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her authority." 10 Then the angel added, "I will greatly multiply your offspring so that they will be too numerous to count."

11 The angel of the LORD proceeded: "Behold, you have conceived and will bear a son. And you shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard your cry of affliction. 12 He will be a wild donkey of a man, and his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand against him; he will live in hostility toward all his brothers."

13 So Hagar gave this name to the LORD who had spoken to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "Here I have seen the One who sees me!" 14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi. It is located between Kadesh and Bered. 15 And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

1. What do you see?
2. See [footnote 1 below](#). The promise of offspring first came to Abraham in chapter 12. What caused Sarai to make the suggestion she made here?
3. What does Sarai's "faith" consist of?
4. How do you know her "faith" is typical, but not really biblical?
5. If Ishmael had actually been the fulfillment of the promise, how should Sarai have behaved toward Hagar?
6. How old is Abraham when Ishmael is born?
7. Explain why it's a bad idea, knowing what God has promised, to help Him fulfill it in case he's forgotten, or in case he's fallen short, and because time is clearly not slowing down. (Who has had a baby at age 100?)
8. After "helping God out" by offering Hagar to Abraham, what happened to Sarai's "faith?" Why did she drive Hagar away?
9. How is Sarai's "faith" different from biblical faith?
10. Look at verses 7-16 above. How does God treat Hagar?
11. How easy do you think it was for Hagar to obey God, and return to Sarai and submit?
12. Could you have done it?

Fourteen years later, when Isaac is born, Hagar and Ishmael are kicked out again.

Read the circumstances in Genesis 21:

9 But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking her son, 10 and she said to Abraham, "Expel the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac!" 11 Now this matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son Ishmael. 12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to everything that Sarah tells you, for through Isaac your offspring will be reckoned. 13 But I will also make a nation of the slave woman's son, because he is your offspring." 14 Early in the morning, Abraham got up, took bread and a skin of water, put them on Hagar's shoulders, and sent her away with the boy. She left and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. 15 When the water in the skin was gone, she left the boy under one of the bushes. 16 Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she said, "Let me not look upon the death of the child!" And as she sat nearby, she lifted up her voice and wept. 17 Then God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he lies. 18 Get up, lift up the boy, and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." 19 Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. 20 And God was with the boy, and he grew up and settled in the wilderness and became a great archer. 21 And while he was dwelling in the Wilderness of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

1. What do you see?
2. This is now the second time Hagar's circumstances have placed her in the wilderness. What do both times have in common?
3. How much of Hagar's plight was under her control? What was she guilty of?
4. How will Hagar survive?
5. Look at verses 12 and 13. Was the boy in any danger at all? What did Abraham know?
6. Look back at 16:1. Explain the choice of a bride for Ishmael. Why Egyptian?
7. Look at verse 19. Have you ever had your eyes opened to something you almost missed?
8. Have you ever read a passage from the Bible frequently, and then have a promise that was there all the time suddenly leap off the page and into your understanding?
9. Pastor asks, "How often in our moments of distress have we been suddenly awakened to God's provision that was right in front of us?" Answer him.
10. How old is Ishmael when this happens? Explain how the circumstances are different for Hagar and the child this time compared to the last time.

Pastor drew a parallel with the woman at the well in John 4:

10 Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God and who is asking you for a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." 11 "Sir," the woman replied, "You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where then will You get this living water? 12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock?" 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who

drinks this water will be thirsty again. 14 But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water so that I will not get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

1. What do you know of this woman? What is her “wilderness” like?
2. How available was the water Jesus offered her?
3. What is the water Jesus is offering?
4. Pastor says, “He’s really talking about a relationship with Himself.” Explain.
5. When is a relationship like a fresh drink of water?

Now look at John 7:

37 On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and called out in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said: ‘Streams of living water will flow from within him.’” 39 He was speaking about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. For the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

1. In the previous verses, in John 5, where did the water flow from?
2. Now where is the source of the water in John 7?
3. Look at verse 39. When was that Spirit given? (When and how was Jesus glorified?)

Pastor says, “The things that we really need, God has provided in Jesus. We need to come to Him realizing that He is that water we crave in that desert place. He’s not only saying that God can bring that provision, actual water when we are thirsty. But He’s also calling us to look for something a little deeper which can only come through a relationship of the heart, from which rivers of living water flow. Jesus is our well in the wilderness.”

1. In the context of Hagar, and her two encounters with the Angel of the Lord, how apt is this parallel?
2. List things we really need.
3. What did Hagar need?
4. What did the woman at the well need?

Look at Matthew 6:

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles strive after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.

1. Draw the parallel here. Did God know what Hagar needed? What the woman at the well needed?
2. Look at verse 32. Does He know what you need?

Mark says, “Sometimes we get stuck on the physical, ‘What am I gonna eat? What am I

gonna drink? What am I gonna wear?’ Hagar saw that her son was going to die, and God allowed her to see that her provision was already there, and in abundant supply. She only had to get her eyes off of her circumstance and onto the Lord.” Mark adds, “I think that’s why it says, ‘Seek first.’ The seek first principle will prevent you from getting stuck on the problem and the pain.”

1. Comment. Do you have insights to add here?
2. If your priorities aren’t right, and the order in which you seek things is wrong, what is the promise? How is The Promise hindered?
3. What steps are in the seeking?
4. What things are in the “...all these things will be added?”
5. If you seek first what do you get first?
6. How is obedience blended into “seeking His righteousness” first?

He says, “God’s provision is not absent...it’s waiting to be revealed.”

Look at what Peter says in 1 Peter 1:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God’s power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

1. Draw the parallel: What is the living hope? How is that like a new birth?
2. How does seeing the resurrection, like Hagar seeing the well, prepare us for what’s ahead?
3. Is there a salvation that has not yet been revealed? Is there yet more that we have not yet seen? That not even Peter or the apostles had seen?
4. How are we shielded by faith? What fiery darts does our faith ward off?
5. When does “the last time” begin for us?
6. Pastor quotes Corrie Ten Boom, who survived the death camp Ravensbrück, and said, “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”
7. Explain why Hagar could have known that Ishmael would not die that second time. What had God promised her in their first encounter? (Look at [Gen 16:10](#) above.) What had she missed in the first promise He made to her?
8. Think of this: if you are lacking “all these things” and you decide to seek the kingdom and His righteousness first, what do you know is coming? How do you know?

Look at Hebrews 13:

7 Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

1. Why does it help to look at the examples we have in scripture?
2. What do we learn from them?
3. Seeing God did this for Hagar, what can we expect?
4. He was faithful to Hagar and to her child. Has anything changed since

that day?

Pastor's steps for taking this home:

- **Pray for spiritual sight.** Pastor says, "We assume that God knows, and therefore we don't need to ask," but look at what Paul prayed for the ***Ephesians in 1:18 I ask that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know the hope of His calling, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and the surpassing greatness of His power to us who believe.*** What would an answer to that prayer look like? What would happen at the church of Ephesus when God answered Paul's prayer? If the eyes of your heart are being enlightened, what is seeing? How? Is there anything wrong with this prayer? Is there something powerful?
- **Trust in His promises.** Remember how Hagar, in her "second exile," had forgotten the promise God had made in her first exile. What has God already told you to look forward to? How many times have you forgotten the promises? Look at ***Isaiah 41:9 I said, 'You are My servant.' I have chosen and not rejected you. 10 Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will surely help you; I will uphold you with My right hand of righteousness.*** What do you see? What is in store for you according to this promise?
- **Look for the well in your wilderness.** Pastor says, "Instead of dwelling on what is missing, ask God to show you what He has placed right in front of you."
- **Practice gratitude.** "Sometimes the key to seeing God's provision is shifting our perspective, thanking Him for what we already have. This works to eliminate the power that lack has in our life." Notice what power lack has in your life, and then counter that power with thanksgiving.

In closing, Pastor related what happened when he had dedicated the most profitable project each year, and then the year came where there was only one project. His testimony: "God was with us." Review what God told Hagar above. God was never unaware of the child's needs nor of Hagar's. Hagar had forgotten His promise. He had never forgotten. He had never abandoned her or the child. His provision is always real.

Look at 2 Timothy 2:

12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; 13 if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

Describe this promise in the context of Hagar and of Abraham and Sarah.

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the SOAP journal studies below throughout the week.
2. Look for the provision that has been there the whole time. Write down what you did not see until now.
3. Sing the song, "I've seen you move. You moved the mountains. And I believe I'll see you do it again. You made the way, where there was no way, and I believe I'll see you do it again." Write down how this applies to today's message. What have you seen? What will you see Him do again?

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Footnotes:

1. **On Abraham and God's promise of offspring**—Sometimes it's good to review how God relates His promise to believers, and then how He walks them through to faith. God's promise to Abraham concerning Isaac began when Abraham first set foot in Canaan's land. Watch the progression through the book of Genesis:

- **Genesis 12:6** *Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the Oak of Moreh at Shechem. And at that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your offspring." So Abram built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 From there Abram moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built an altar to the LORD, and he called on the name of the LORD. Sarai was barren.*
 - He had no offspring, but he built an altar.
- **Genesis 13:14** *After Lot had departed, the LORD said to Abram, "Now lift up your eyes from the place where you are, and look to the north and south and east and west, 15 for all the land that you see, I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if one could count the dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Get up and walk around the land, through its length and breadth, for I will give it to you."*
 - Again, there was no offspring. Abraham is older, and still childless and God speaks of numbers.
- **Genesis 15:1** *After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." 2 But Abram replied, "O Lord GOD, what can You give me, since I remain childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Abram continued, "Behold, You have given me no offspring, so a servant in my household will be my heir." 4 Then the word of the LORD came to Abram, saying, "This one will not be your heir, but one who comes from your own body will be your heir." 5 And the LORD took him outside and said, "Now look to the heavens and count the stars, if you are able." Then He told him, "So shall your offspring be." 6 Abram believed the LORD, and it was credited to him as righteousness... 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land—from the river of Egypt to the great River Euphrates—19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites."*
 - Notice, this promise came, and Sarai tries to help God in the very next chapter. It's significant, but another footnote for another time, that Abraham, having believed God, still felt that the flesh was the way to go, and not the extreme angle contained in the very real, literal promise.
- **Genesis 17:17** *Abraham fell facedown. Then he laughed and said to himself, "Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah give birth at the age of ninety?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live under Your blessing!" 19 But God replied, "Your wife Sarah will indeed bear you a son,*

and you are to name him Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. 20 As for Ishmael, I have heard you, and I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He will become the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. 21 But I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year.”

- Do you notice that Abraham actually laughed at a literal fulfillment of the promise...at age 100? How many times have we scoffed at the idea that the miraculous is imminent? How many times has this been taught in our churches, compromising our faith?
- **Genesis 18:9** *“Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked. “There, in the tent,” he replied. 10 Then the LORD said, “I will surely return to you at this time next year, and your wife Sarah will have a son!” Now Sarah was behind him, listening at the entrance to the tent. 11 And Abraham and Sarah were already old and well along in years; Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. 12 So she laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?” 13 And the LORD asked Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Can I really bear a child when I am old?’ 14 Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you—in about a year—and Sarah will have a son.” 15 But Sarah was afraid, so she denied it and said, “I did not laugh.” “No,” replied the LORD, “but you did laugh.”*
 - And of course, this ended in her giving birth as promised. She was ninety. Abraham was one hundred. They both laughed...and continued to do what is required for a child to be conceived.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (Scripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Genesis 15:1-4
Tuesday: Genesis 15:5-6
Wednesday: John 4:13-14
Thursday: John 7:37-39
Friday: Matthew 6:31-34
Saturday: 1 Peter 1:3-5
Sunday: Hebrews 13:7-8

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.