



THE MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 21, 2021

NEWS AND NOTES

Congregational Meeting
TBA

Weekly Bible Studies
All temporarily being conducted via Zoom. Check our “friends” page on Facebook for more information.

Times of Service
Sunday

Bible study: 9:45 AM
Worship: 10:45 AM; 6 PM

Wednesday

Bible study: 7:30 PM
(Immediately followed by a short worship service)

First Friday of Month
Singing
On hold

Address and Contact

University Heights Church of Christ
445 Columbia Ave., Lexington, KY 40508
(859) 255-6257
www.uheightschurch.com

A TROUBLING EVENT FROM “A FRIEND OF GOD”

In 2:23 of his letter, James quotes Genesis 15:6 (*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness*) before adding this incredible statement: *and he was called a friend of God*. Abraham was remarkable for a number of reasons. He truly was a godly and righteous man. Both Romans 4 and Hebrews 11 offer concise reminders of his great faith should you wish to bring it to mind.

Yet this great man was not flawless. A troubling episode is found in Genesis 16. Sarai and Abram decided to take matters into their own hands and “help” God fulfill his promise to give them a child. Hagar, Sarai’s Egyptian servant woman, was given to Abram to have sex with to produce a child. This appears to have been a fairly common practice. He did and Hagar conceived Ishmael. She became contemptuous of Sarai and Sarai became furious. She laid the blame upon Abram and began to mistreat Hagar to such an extent that she fled. The most troubling aspect of the whole sordid affair is that Sarai’s harsh treatment of Hagar did not begin until Abram *gave her permission*. Note verse 6. *But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please.” Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.*

We can think up a number of reasons for why Abram said this to Sarai. No man wants his wife to be angry, especially at him. This could very well be a mollifying effort on Abram’s part. “Happy wife, happy life!” It could be that Abram recognized the scheme he and Sarai worked up was not how God intended his promise to be fulfilled. If Sarai sent Hagar away than perhaps “out of sight, out of mind” could come into play. Of course, Hagar *was* just an Egyptian slave woman. She had no standing or rights to speak of. If it is true that a slave was considered little more than property, than Abram and Sarai could do whatever they wanted with their property.

The disgusting truth is that Abram used Hagar for sex then gave her up to Sarai’s anger. He did it again in Genesis 21 when Sarah ordered him to cast Hagar and Ishmael out. He wasn’t happy about it

Members Needing Our Prayers

Janet Brundige, Julie Patton, Pat Seabolt, Jackie Litmer, Alexa and Charlie Lake, Bennie Poynter, Joyce Bolton, Karen Spivey, Rhonda Boyd, Cindy Bradbury, Paul Atkisson, Whitney Crouch, Rhonda Boyd (and family)

Others Needing Prayers

Rachel White, Duane Harrod, Grace Meyer, Andy Seabolt, Meredith Nicholson, Alice and Lonnie Anderson, Michael Hogan, Glen Perkins, Ethan Shelton, Jen Victoria Poynter, Terry Daniels, Harvey Baker, Leroy Weatherholt, Ginny Wren, Robert Brundige, John Blessing, William Roberts, Paul and Marrian Lyda, Cindi's niece, Dana, and her children, Shane (a relative of Cindi), Mark (Carol's son), Ron Harmon

To Our Guests

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because of Ishmael, but there is no mention at all of Hagar. He gave her some bread and a *single* bottle of water and sent her out into the wilderness. In both cases, (Genesis 16 and 21) *God* was the one who cared for the misused and mistreated slave woman.

Hagar was not *just* a woman, *just* a slave, *just* an Egyptian, *just* an instrument to be used, or *just* anything else. She was an Image-bearer, *just* like Abraham and Sarah. How easy it is to consider others less than ourselves and how foolish the reasons! Skin color, grammar, educational achievements, money, careers, clothing, music, political affiliations, and anything else that causes one to view people as “other” or “less” stands opposed to God’s purposes and plans in humankind.

In a society growing less tolerant and more tribal, God’s people desperately need to grow in empathy. The willingness to truly *hear* the concerns, fears, and troubles of the “other”, and to strive to be a servant to them, is not merely a kindness. It is loving our neighbor as ourself. Indeed, it is the only way to remove the dividing and arrogant appellation “other” and replace it with the truest, most meaningful one of all: “fellow Image-bearer.”

Adam Litmer

Elders	Deacons	Evangelist
Troy Antle	Richard Brundige	Adam Litmer
David Collins	Adam Daniels	
John Thompson	Adam Litmer	
	Frank Patton	
	Jamie Powell	
	Pat Seabolt	
	Matt Thompson	
	James Weatherholt	

