

**“Sarah and Hagar”**  
**By Brother Parrish Lee**  
**Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Amen. You may be seated. I want to thank Brother Malcolm for the encouragement make sure everybody's in tune, including me. What a beautiful day; what a beautiful day. Man, it is awesome! It is wonderful to see so many beautiful faces, and to feel the beautiful spirit, and to have such a wonderful time in worship, and just to enjoy the company of God's people. I just want to say good morning to everybody, and happy Mother's Day. And I want to say happy Mother's Day to everybody, because everybody has a mother. Everybody has a mother; you got here somehow. It wasn't from under a rock, and it wasn't a stork. It was somebody who went through some pain to get you here, so we're going to say happy day to them. Happy Mother's Day to everybody. And we're not insensitive, we're not insensitive; as several people have mentioned today, some of us, our moms may not be with us any longer, and our prayer today is both a prayer of blessing and comfort. If there is a matter of estrangement, we ask for a blessing of a healing, that maybe that relationship can be restored, because what seems impossible to man, what we see is that God makes all things possible. He is *that* kind of God. There is only one God, and that God is able to do that. Give it to Him, and He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. Amen, amen. That's not the message, we're just warming up, here. Wonderful time, wonderful time.

Our theme for the month is from the Book of Acts, chapter one, and it's verse thirteen and fourteen, and it says:

**Acts 1:13** *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.*

So, the first verse, in thirteen, it talks about the Apostles, and, the second verse, it says in verse fourteen:

**Acts 1:14** *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

An, this, of course, being women's month, the month that we take out to honor our women, and we have a mission here to share, to spend this month sharing about the importance of their roles and the lessons that we learn from them. And we learn, here, in the Bible, and we see in verse thirteen that this place was the place where the Apostles, the disciples, the ones who walked around with the Lord, and the ones whom Jesus said, "On this rock, I will build my church," (Matthew 1:18) they were in that upper room. But, let it be known to all of us, that, also in that upper room, the Bible says, were the women with them. The women, and, Mary the mother, and, of course, His brethren. Yeah, the upper room, where the Holy Ghost first fell; it wasn't specifically and only to the disciples, but to those who disciple themselves after the Lord, men and women alike. Men and women alike.

And, yes, we have the rest of the month to talk about women in women's month, but, today, we are going to talk about mothers. Today, we will center on mothers. And, for that, we need to go to the Book of Genesis.

**Genesis 16:1-11**

*Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.*

If we could just bow our heads, just for a moment, in prayer. Lord God, we are just continually amazed, and we're continuously enamored, God, because You are just so amazing. And, God, when we come before You, You always continue to give us so much more than we could ever bring, and, yet, You receive our offerings. And thank You for a time of gathering together, today; we thank You for a time of praise and worship to You. We thank You for the blessings that You've put through, and the strengthening, and ask, God, that, as Your Word said, that Your Word will not return unto You void, but will surely accomplish that to which You sent it. We thank You to be a blessing on Your Word as we go over it today, that Your messenger might get out of the way this morning, and that Your message would have its freedom to do in our lives what You destined it to be. And this we come, pray, and submit, and we claim this in the name of the Lord Jesus. And everyone said amen. Amen.

Amen, Saints, so, the title of our message today is simply, "Sarah and Hagar." Sarah and Hagar.

**Part 1 A Lesson from Sarah and Hagar**

Now, we'd like to talk, specifically, about two women, today, the two women that we have already begun-- Sarah and Hagar. One, or, more appropriately, two mothers. Now, Sarah, of course, we see she was a woman who had a husband who had a relationship with God, and Hagar was the one who had a relationship with Sarah, and by that means, also, had a relationship with the man of God. And Sarah was facing a dilemma, here, you see, that—well, to give a little background, Abraham was a man that God had made a promise to. And, as God had made this promise to Abraham, He told him that he was going to be the father of many. Now, there's only one potential problem with that and that is that Abraham was in his eighties, at the time. In his mid-eighties. And his wife was ten years younger than him, that would put her in her mid-seventies. So, Abraham was in his mid-eighties, and Sarah was in her mid-seventies. But Abraham believed God; he believed this was going to come about. Because God said it, he believed it, that settled it. Sarah, well, what about Sarah? What about her believing this? Well, Sarah's no dummy; she knows that seventy-five year old women ain't going around having kids. She looks around, and she knows, "Hey, you know what? My seventy-five is a real seventy-five. There's things no longer happening in my body." And, so, Sarah has to make some decisions. She thought, "You know, I could give my husband my servant-girl, and she could give him a child, and that will be me giving him a child through her. That will be my son. It will be incorporated in me." And Sarah came to this—it's not completely out

of the ordinary, it wasn't, for the times, it's not something that's completely unheard of. In fact, you could say that this is the Old Testament form of surrogacy, the Old Testament form of surrogacy. A woman using another woman to help her to bring forth some children.

And, we see that Hagar, after she *became* with child, she kind of looked down on Sarah. In fact, we see that she looked down on her, and Sarah had a problem with that, and she went to Abraham, and she said, "Hey, look, I got a problem with this. You need to be taking care of this." And Abraham said, "Hey, look, that ain't—you are the one that invited this situation in the first place, so that's your situation to take care of." I'm paraphrasing a lot, trying to bring it into 2016. "It's your business to take care of." And Sarah said, "Oh, okay." And the Bible says that she went out and she chastised her. She chastised her kind of harshly, and the Bible says that Hagar fled. Hagar fled. And, so, Hagar fled away because of the chastisement, and then the Lord had to meet her. The Lord had to meet her, and the Lord encouraged her to do two things: To return, and submit. To return to where you belonged in the first place, and submit, in other words, "Go back to where you're supposed to be, and get your attitude right. Go back and change your attitude. This is the will of God." And Hagar did. She went back, changed her attitude, Sarah received her back, and, lo and behold, she delivered a child, and the promise was unto him, unto Ishmael, and he grew and waxed before the Lord.

Talking about Sarah and Hagar. And the one thing I didn't mention is that when the Lord told Hagar to return, he told her that, if she were to get her attitude right, the Lord had a blessing for her, she couldn't even wrap her mind around. It was going to be that big.

**Genesis 18:10-15** *And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.*

So, we see here, after Hagar has come back—we skipped down some chapters, and we got to the place where—now, the Lord speaks to Abraham, He talks to him again, and this is some thirteen-plus years later. Thirteen years and several months. So, as they were, Sarah *was* in her mid-seventies, she is now very close to ninety. And, Abraham, of course, is very close to one hundred years old. And the Lord returns to them. And the Lord returns, and He says to them, "Hey, look, Abraham, you're going to have a son. You're going to have a son with your wife, Sarah." Now, this time, this time that God is speaking to Abraham, Sarah is listening in. Now, this time that God is speaking, Sarah hears it, and Sarah, you know, she's almost ninety years old. She hears it, and Sarah does what Sarah did—ninety years old—Sarah laughs. She laughs. Why? "Oh, I'm ninety years old. I'm not *past* the change of life, I'm waaay past the change of life! I'm past those hot flashes and those other things. I'm way past that, and, now? Now?" Yeah. And I can imagine what Sarah must have said, what she must have thought as she laughed. She must have said, "Ha! You know, if it was really going to be like this, Lord, why didn't You bless me when I was younger? I would have been able to handle my kids then. Why didn't you bless me when...? I'm ninety years old. Can you imagine a ninety-five year old running after a five year old? Good God! Lord! Why didn't You help me when I would have more patience? I would have more energy. I wouldn't have had to cook for as many. Lord, it would have been a better time if You had arranged this a little bit differently." But, see, there was something that Sarah didn't realize. See, she was listening in on a conversation, the conversation wasn't to her. She was listening in, and she laughed at what the Lord had spoken to somebody else. Have you ever, have you ever been in a place where God is dealing and speaking

with you, and somebody else might see the change starting to happen in your life, and they're like, "It'll never work. That ain't never going to come to fruit. You are never going to turn out to be what you think."? Because they are mocking what God is about to do in your life. They can't see it; they don't know it, they can't taste it, so they don't believe it, that God is about to this. But the thing that she failed to realize is that it's the same God! It's the same God that kept Abraham in the battles. It's the same God that told him he was going to bear a son, and she ran out and got Hagar. "Well, this is going to be the way it's going to happen." She failed to realize that it was God Almighty doing this. In other words, as God told Abraham, "Why is she laughing? Is anything too hard for Me? I'm God Almighty; I don't care if you're ninety! I don't care! What is that to me? I'm God! I don't care if we're out in the desert. I don't care—you're saying things to God! What is that to Me?" And what God was trying to show her was, ninety or not, He wasn't finished with what he wanted to do in her life. Yeah, that is a message that we want to have for everybody here, today. No matter where you are in your life, right now, it doesn't matter if other people laugh at where you are, doesn't matter if they can't see it, or make fun of it, or they try and discourage your heart, God is not finished with a one of us here, today.

## Part 2 God Is Not Finished With Us

**Philippians 1:6** *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

If the Lord *started* working in you, He will finish it; all we got to do is be faithful. He will finish it! If He started it, he will finish it.

**Hebrews 10:35-36** *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*

After ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. God ain't finished. He will perform it in God's time. If God would have given Abraham kids when he was twenty or thirty or forty or even fifty, what big deal is that? what a big deal? Not a big deal at all. Who would have gotten the glory? Abraham and Sarah. Abraham and Sarah. And everybody would have said, "Did you hear? Abraham and Sarah are having kids. Let's go over and welcome them." But, when you're a hundred, and you're ninety, and you're having kids, "Good Lord! Something is going on! Naw, that ain't them! That's a miracle, no question about it." It became something about God. He waited until everybody would know it wasn't them; it was God doing this thing.

You know, if we have done the will of God, we might receive the promise that He has for us. It's not enough to be around. As we said, Sarah was married to Abraham, and Abraham was the man that God had promised. It's not enough to be around somebody that's saved when God is talking to you. It's not enough to go and get their advice, when God is talking to you. It's not enough to say, "Well, I'm in the house, and everybody went over there, so I went over there, too." It's not enough to push it off on somebody else, when God has it for you. And, let's face it, Saints, this morning, God has it for us. Can you imagine how different this whole text would have read? We hear about Abraham and God talking, but we never see Sarah seeking God. We never hear her questioning or requesting. We never hear about her taking out time. We hear about her going to make a decision with her servant-girl, and we hear about her laughing, but we never her about the great repentance, and the great prostrating, or the sanctifying, or presenting herself to God to see what God had for her. And, in fact when God told Abraham what He had

for her, she laughed at it. How different it would have been, had Sarah sought God, and received the answer from God, or Hagar had her attitude right in the first place.

And I'm saying this specifically to mothers, because this text is to the giver of life. You know how precious that the life that you give is, and not just to your children, but to all children. For a fact, we can all remember, we can tell stories about it—as Kirk was starting to mention—we could tell stories about other mothers who have influenced us. We can tell stories about teachers who mothered us. We can tell stories about aunts, and, sometimes it was ladies that we didn't even know that said, "You know you shouldn't do that, son." Well, I know for a fact there was people doing that in my life; I was that kind of kid. But, how different would this have read if Hagar had had her heart and attitude right and if Sarah had sought the Lord in the first place? And, yet, because they didn't, we have the legacy of the two families, the family of Ishmael, and the family of Isaac, which went on into Jacob and Esau, who have been at odds for millennium. Millennium. They hold the power to life. It wasn't Abraham's doing; this was all about the moms. They had the power to influence, to change, and to move, to motivate, to bring life, or even to bring death. They just didn't realize it.

And, there's something else that is supposed to be known about this whole thing. You know, sometimes, struggle is the will of God. Sometimes, we are supposed to struggle.

**1 Peter 4:12** *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

**1 Peter 1:7** *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth...*

The trial of you faith, and think it not strange concerning those trials... Sometimes, we have to know that struggle is God's will. It is for a purpose; it is to get us to a certain place. You know, God talks about the pain that a mom goes through when she has her labor, and I don't know what that's like, I've only heard stories; I've heard about the screaming, I've heard about the kicking. I've heard about so many things about when a woman is in labor. She might be able to say all kinds of things; don't care who you are, but, I also heard the second part of the story: I don't know; am I right? Is that true? But, I've also heard, and the Lord talks about it in His Word, He talks about, but when the baby is born, when he comes about, there is a joy that passes that pain that went forth (John 16:21). When they see the little eyes, and the little mouths open, and they see the hands reaching for... I hear that the smile is a smile like none other. That's what I hear. I don't know that one either, but that's what I hear. Is that right? That part is true? Of course, moms say that. And I thought, I thought, "Wow, that's kind of interesting. They forget all about the pain, and it doesn't even come into mind anymore," and I thought, "I don't know how true that is, because, every time I would, you know, give my mom some heartburn, she would pull me aside and say, 'Do you know how long I was in labor for you? And this is how you treat me?'" So, I, yeah, well. So, anyway, but this is synonymous—the pain and then the joy—this is synonymous to relationships, because, for relationships to succeed, generally, you see a good relationship, and you'll be able to go and ask them, "Hey, how did this come about? How did you get such a wonderful time?" and usually, they'll tell you, "You know what? We had to go through some things. We had to fight some things, and sometimes we had to endure." And they say, "You know what? Love, love is expensive. Real love, real love costs something." And that's what I've come to understand. Even friendship. You want to have a good friend, when y'all get a misunderstanding going on, you have to find a way to make it up with each other, or else your friendship is doomed. Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, any relationship, there has to be some sort of struggle and pain and there's things that come along, and, when it flourishes, it's because you made up, and now you have a better relationship for it.

And, I appreciated what Brother Chris said, when he talked about, last week, he talked about his aunt, and how her husband died, and left her with three small kids, and how she had to set some tones,

because they were all three boys, and they got testing her, and she set some tones, and make some standards, and sometimes she had to, kind of, you know... Well, you know, somebody else here was testifying about how his mom had three boys, and she was raising them, how she took a broomstick out, and the boy went and broke the broomstick, but that wasn't the testimony that Chris mentioned last week. He mentioned how sometimes it was a struggle for her, but he said that as he met one of those kids, just a few weeks ago, he said that you would be amazed at just the genuine love that was there for the mom as they appreciated the sacrifices that she had made. And, I appreciated how Chris had said all of this, and, you know, you have to say that this applies to, not just women, but this applies to men, also: That, sometimes life happens to you, and sometimes you get in a place where, this isn't the life that you would have picked, if you had had your druthers. Maybe you missed out on a promotion at work; maybe you didn't get the special meal that you wanted to have, or even the dessert from the meal that you wanted to have, maybe you didn't get the salad that you wanted to have—and that's a woman thing—but, for everybody, for everybody, part of it is a struggle, and I'm about to make a point here. There has to be struggles. There's times when you retreated. There's times when maybe you thought you had a prospective, a person who would join you in your life, and it didn't work out. And, there's other times when—can I really say this?—through all that, you made it. Through all that, you came through. The times when you've been lonely, and nobody understood. The times when you've looked in the mirror, and saw something that you didn't really want to see, and wished you could have seen something else. The times when you were in pain, and you didn't even know what the source of it was. The times when the mill arrived, and you didn't even know how you were going to answer. And, through all that, God has brought you through.

God answered both Sarah and Hagar. God did answer them both, because He had a blessing for them in their lives; they just had to stay faithful and go through. I heard a song, and it talked about the scars that we go through as Christians. And as I was listening to this song, it talks about the times when they were the ones that messed up. It talked about the times when they were disappointed. It talked about the times when they hurt somebody else. It talked about the times when they were hurt. And I thought, "You know what? That, that, that's pretty accurate, the scars that we, as Christians have. Specifically because we get our scars from living for God.

**2 Corinthians 4:10** *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

So, the message is, here, God has brought us through all of this. You might say, "Well, Brother Parrish, you don't know what I went through. You don't know where I am right now. You don't know how close I came," and, really, I don't have to know, because, what I do know is what I have seen God do in our lives. Now, the Bible says we shouldn't lean to our own understanding, but trust in Him in all our ways, and He shall direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5-6). Oh, what about Jacob? Jacob, you walk with a limp. Apostle Paul, you've got marks on your back. Lord, I see the holes in Your hand, I see the hole in Your side, and the holes in Your feet. What are these? These are the scars of God bringing them through. I see the scars of God bringing all of us through. Again, God is not finished with us.

And out last part:

### **Part 3 Last Words to Moms**

Moms, according to the Bible, it says to teach your children. Teach them about prayer. You don't have to force them to pray, but teach them to respect you when you pray. Teach them how to see what happens when you pray. Teach them the value of prayer. You teach them about following the Word.

When I was a kid, I didn't like reading a whole lot, except if it was a comic book. But, teach me that the Word is important by letting me see you read it, and then let me see you apply it in your life. Let your children see you apply it in your life. Teach them that it's okay not to be perfect, but it's not okay not to strive to be better. Teach your children how to worship, that it's okay to lift your hands, close your eyes, and call on His name, and bless Him. Teach your children. Moms, teach your daughters about Godly dress. Teach your daughters that it's not okay for a woman to let her womanly parts just hang out. And, if a man sees that, that's not the kind of relationship you should be wanting anyway, because he ain't after any... Teach your daughters that, when it comes to a man, you want a man who's going to enhance and respect your walk with the Lord. If he's going to fall short in that, that's not the kind of man you want, anyway. Teach your sons what a woman in God looks like. Let them know that, when you go to look for a woman, this is the example, somewhere in this vicinity that you should be looking for. Many other things is going to be trouble.

And, on Mother's Day, I have to say a few words to the men. My heart breaks because, I can't tell you how many moms in the church, in the community, at work, in my family, and even moms that never saw me before, would just ask me—start a conversation—ask me, and they all would ask the same request: "Can you help me with my children? Can you help me with my child? Can you help me with my son? What can you tell me?" Because their hearts bleed for their children. And this goes out specifically to the men: Men, when you see a young man, no matter how old, when you see a young man that's in need, the Bible doesn't say you go out and be a surrogate parent, but it does tell us to teach them, and to mentor them. It tells us to be an example to them, and it tells us to be a friend to them. Let them know that that's not the end of the road; that we can show them a better way by living for them and strengthening them. And, if it's a young lady, make sure that you do whatever you can. It's not appropriate for a man to—I tell you what, I know, in my family, if a man in the street was looking to guide some of the young girls in my family, I've got five brothers they're quick to take care of that. You can pray for them, you can help, say, "What can I do? Can I bring somebody else along?" Whatever. But, women should be raising up women. And that is, that is Scripture.

And, with that, our last Scripture:

**Philippians 4:7** *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Amen. Give the Lord a praise.