

# Fatherlessness, the Cry of Ishmael

by Emanuel Esh

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*The sermon explores the story of Ishmael and its relevance to our experiences with fatherlessness, highlighting the importance of recognizing God as our Father and finding hope in His promises.*

**Duration:** 1:17:30

**Scripture:** Genesis 21:9

**Topics:** "Ishmael"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Hagar and her son Ishmael being driven out of their home. Hagar, who had been guaranteed food, clothing, and safety in her home, is now forced to leave everything behind. She wanders in the wilderness with her son, and when their water runs out, she leaves him under a shrub, unable to watch him die. However, God hears their cry and shows Hagar a well of water that she couldn't see before. The speaker relates this story to the present day, highlighting the spiritual wilderness and longing for a father that many Muslims still experience. He emphasizes that Jesus is the well of living water, but their eyes are blinded to it.

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## Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Greetings to each one this morning.

It's a joy to be in the house of God and worship together, especially with those of like precious faith, whose hearts, minds are one with us. We were in a cave church in Egypt three weeks ago, and we felt so ostracized or so separated because we were not one heart with them. It was an orthodox Coptic church, and we couldn't understand what was being said, but we sensed the spirit of it was very orthodox, Catholic maybe or something like that, and we were not of one heart with them, but it's a joy and a blessing to be together with brothers and sisters whose hearts are in Christ and who are walking in the fear of God and

desiring more of God.

We have some special friends here this morning. My wife's oldest brother, Eli, and his wife, Rosella, from New York. It's a treat that they would come today.

God bless you. Welcome to all the visitors and to each one here this morning. I plan to share a message on the cry of Ishmael this morning.

I know most of you are probably wanting to hear more about our trip to the Middle East, but we are going to have to let most of that until next Saturday. Next Saturday they have the tent meeting in the afternoon. We plan to be sharing slides and about the Middle East trip.

So that's when that is planned to come forth. But we did have a good trip, and it was a blessing to go. Could we just bow our heads for prayer as we begin here? Father in heaven, it is with joy that we come to you as your children, having been given, having received the gift of life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank you, Father, for life. Thank you for help. Thank you for Jesus.

Thank you for your word. I pray that your word would be brought forth with anointing. I pray that your word would go into the hearts today.

I pray that you would meet specific needs and you would minister life to each one. Give us some of that living water and some of that living bread today. In Jesus Christ's name.

Amen. Many times as I have been reading the Bible in times past, being quite familiar with it as a child and so forth, I have realized that often times I read God's word, or I read the Bible, especially the Old Testament stories, I tend to read it with a good guy, bad guy mentality. I know most of you don't watch much television or movies, at least I'm hoping you're not, but some of you have in your past, but there's always this good guy and bad guy.

Is that right? And so even as I read the Bible, there seems to be some of that in me, that okay, when I read about Rachel and Leah, in my mind, Rachel is a beautiful young lady and Leah is some bleary eyed, one pale face back here and automatically I'm pro-Rachel. You know, I'm for Rachel. And so I read the story from her perspective and that Leah is over there.

She's, you know, I don't even pay attention to the facts of her life. I'll get involved in Rachel's life, but not in Leah's life. And I end up realizing that I read God's word that way at times and I go through the Old Testament stories.

And one of the things that came alive to me on our trip there to the Middle East is that as we ministered to the Arab people, the Muslim people, I knew that their roots were back with Ishmael, one of the sons of Abraham. And so as I've been studying this, I realize again that I have in times past, when I would read the story about Abraham and Isaac, I would read about Isaac and would, you know, Ishmael's the bad guy. And I would just do almost like Abraham would do.

I would just kind of push him aside and cast him out. And so that's kind of the nature of the tendency that I've seen in my own heart. And so this morning, I would like to speak on the life of Ishmael.

Specifically, bringing out the fatherlessness of Ishmael and his situation. The cry of Ishmael. The origin of the Muslim people is back to Ishmael.

One of the sons of Ishmael, named Kedar, is said to be one of Muhammad's, the prophet of Islam's forefathers. Saying that Muhammad came directly through the line of Kedar, which was the son of Ishmael. Muhammad is the one who supposedly received revelations and put them together and they made the Koran, which is the Muslim's book, while our book is the Bible.

And so these are in conflict one to the other in many ways. But I'd like to turn to the scriptures and look at the birth of Ishmael, the blessing of Ishmael, and also the casting out of Ishmael. And I want this message to apply to us here today.

In this respect. There is a need for you and I to recognize and to realize that God is our Father. Some of us have been rejected by our fathers.

Some of us have grown up feeling abandoned by our fathers. There's hope. There's hope for you today if that's your situation.

If you are still, in a sense, hurting over a father-child issue. There's hope for you. There's hope for Ishmael.

And so as we go through this message I want you to be able to see the life of Ishmael and perhaps God can speak to our hearts concerning this issue of fatherlessness also. Turn with me to Genesis chapter 16 to begin reading. We have the story here of Abraham.

Abraham had left his father's house in chapter 12. He had left his father's land and had gone out. God had made him a promise that he would bless him and that he would make his name great and make a great nation out of him.

And so that all the families of the earth would be blessed because of Abraham. And so somehow in that blessing of Abraham there, God was saying that Abraham is going to... your seed is going to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. And so somehow in that blessing Abraham would have been able to pick up the fact that he's going to have children.

Although he was 75 years old and his wife was a little bit younger, but she was barren and they had no children. And then in chapter... that was chapter 12. In chapter 13 the Lord again blessed him and promised the land there in Israel to him.

In chapter 15 the Lord appeared to Abraham in a vision and spoke to him there and told him to look at the stars and so forth and that if he could number them, so should his seed be. And Abraham believed the Lord there and it was counted to him for righteousness. Then in chapter 16, right after that, and that is where the Lord had promised to give him a son.

One that would come forth from his own bowels would be his heir. One that he would father. And so that was chapter 15.

Chapter 16 is then where we enter into the story here. Remember the promise was given to Abraham that he would have a son. Chapter 16, verse 1. Now Saddai, Abraham's wife, bare him no children.

And she had a handmaid, an Egyptian whose name was Hagar. And Saddai said unto Abram, 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 Abraham hearkened to the voice of Saddai. Abraham must have told his wife that he is going to have a son.

He is going to have children. And time would continue on and Sarah would not conceive and so Sarah got this brilliant idea that maybe, it may be that God is saying that you are going to have a son by my maid. And so we can have children this way.

And so she went and she gave her maid to Abraham. And Saddai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her husband, Abram, to be his wife. I'm so glad that Jesus made this very clear in the New Testament that there is to be one husband and one wife.

Jesus takes us back to the original, to the Garden of Eden, and says in the beginning it was male and female, one husband and one wife, and that is the standard today. But in this place, Abram took that maid to himself and that is when the trouble began. Abraham's troubles began at this point.

Sarai, she wanted children so bad, and he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived, and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. Jealousy immediately began to set in here as Hagar went in, and Abraham went in unto her, and he married her, took her to be his wife, and he went in unto her, and she conceived, and she began to be pregnant. And Sarah, of course, is jealous at this point, and Sarah, and then it says Hagar, when she saw that she had conceived, she despised Sarah.

And there is this thing going between these two, and she was despising Sarah, and Sarah, that upset her, and so Sarah said unto Abram, verse 5, My wrong be upon thee. I have given my maiden to thy bosom, and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes, as the Lord judged between me and thee. But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand, do to her as it pleases 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 shore. This is the first time that we can read of that an angel appeared to a person. First things are important.

And his angel said to Hagar, Sarai's maid. He said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence comest thou, whither wilt thou go? Notice here that the angel identified her as Sarai's maid, and not as Abram's wife. 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 unto 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. God's blessing is upon Ishmael and his seed.

I've come to realize that I have in my heart, I'm seeking the Lord, I'm praying about this, but it seems like there is some anti-Islam sentiment in my heart. I'm just beginning to realize more and more as I study this. Most of us think, when we think of Muslims, we think of 9-11.

We think of the towers burning, airplanes crashing, and all those things, and it's all blamed on the Muslim terrorists. And so, whenever, since that time, Islam has become a threat to the U.S. And, Islam is rising in power, and it seems like Islam is a threat to the church. My response to that is, like this, that's not the right response.

That's not the right response. Because God has blessed Ishmael. God has a plan for Ishmael.

God has a promise for Ishmael. I'll read it again. The angel of the Lord said to her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it should 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. There's four places in the Bible that the name of a child was given before birth. And Ishmael was the first one.

Isaac was the second, John the Baptist, and then Jesus. The angel came and named this son while she was out there by the fountain in the wilderness. And I shall call his name Ishmael.

Why? Because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And the name Ishmael means God hears. God hears.

Remember that. Verse 12. And he will be a wild man.

If you look that wording up, it actually says he will be a wild donkey of a man. Ishmael is going to be a wild donkey of a man. His hand will be against every man.

Every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren. And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou, God, seest me. For she said, Here I also have looked after him that seeth me.

Wherefore the well was called Bir-le-hai-rai. Behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. And Hagar bare Abram a son, and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare Ishmael.

And Abram was fourscore six years old when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram. Hagar goes back. She obeys the voice of the angel.

She goes back and submits herself as a servant to Hagar. And it seems like she would go back there and submit herself that way, not as a wife, but as a servant to Hagar. Let's look at chapter 17.

Again, for the blessing of Ishmael. Chapter 17, we have verse 18. A little bit on chapter 17 is when Abraham, the Lord God, met with him again there, appeared to Abraham in chapter 1, and made a covenant with him there.

And he specifically gave another blessing there. In verse 15, God said to Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her and give thee a son also of her.

Yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations, kings of people shall be in her. God changed Abram's name to Abraham, and He changed Sarai's name to Sarah. And He spoke of this son that Sarah is going to bare.

Up to this point, Abraham thought that this would be the son that the blessing of God would flow through. Abraham laughed about this, and he said, Shall a child be born to him that is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah that is ninety years old bare? And Abraham said to God, verse 18, Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee. I don't know what Abraham saw in that, but he begged God for a blessing for Ishmael.

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bare thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac. And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard thee.

Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. This is a blessing that Ishmael received.

Ishmael was a son of Abraham, and Abraham blessed him, and God blessed him specifically, saying he would beget twelve sons, and have twelve princes, and they would be exceedingly great, and it would be a great nation. Today the nation of Islam is 1.6 billion. It's a great nation.

But God made it very clear to Abraham, but my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee, at this set time next year. And God left off talking with Abraham. And Abraham went, and he took Ishmael there, and he circumcised him.

God instituted the right of circumcision at that point. Now let's go to chapter... Then we see in chapter 18, we have the story of Lot and Solomon and Gomorrah. Chapter 21 is where Isaac is born.

Sarah bore a son, and they named him Isaac. It means laughing. Let's go down to verse 8. The child has been born.

It's been a couple of years old. Verse 8, And the child grew, Isaac did, and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his sons.

This was a very, very difficult situation. God had very clearly told Abraham that in Isaac would thy seed be called. And Isaac was the one who would have the blessing.

Ishmael, however, was the firstborn. And the firstborn has the right to the promises, has the right to be the leader of the tribe, and has the right to inherit all that his father has for him. That is the firstborn's right.

But the promise of God said that it would be the secondborn, I think, was where the blessing would be. And now you have this difficulty. Abraham had approximately 13 or 14 years that he spent with his son, Ishmael.

Abraham had never had a son before. And here in his old age he had a son. And I believe that Ishmael was very precious to Abraham.

He loved him. He trained him. He taught him about God.

I believe he taught all he knew about God to his son, Ishmael. Many times we overlook all of what Abraham would have taught Ishmael because our focus goes right to Isaac. But Ishmael was a son of Abraham.

And Abraham loved him. But there was a problem with these two women in his house. And there was also a problem with when Isaac was born, it immediately brought more conflict because now the promised one was going to be Isaac.

And I believe that Ishmael would have known that. When they weaned Isaac, I don't know how old he would have been, maybe two or three years old in those days. That's about how old they would be maybe.

There was a great feast made. Abraham made a great feast. And I don't know what happened all in this house.

But I suppose that when Abraham, when Sarah gave birth to Isaac, that Abraham's affections were turned from Ishmael to Isaac. Even as young parents here, we sometimes recognize that after our firstborn child has been there, we've given lots of attention to that child. And about two years later, the second one comes along and immediately there's conflict with these two children.

Our two-year-old or three-year-old is all of a sudden devoid of a lot of attention and begins to throw fits and all kinds of things because the attention is given to the newborn one. I suppose this is what happened in this home. And Hagar sees her son losing favor with Abraham because there's another son here to take his place.

And Sarah, on the day of the weaning of this great feast, and there's lots of people around there, she sees Ishmael mocking Isaac. And so she goes to Abraham, she complains, she said, Cast out this bondwoman and her son. He shall not be an heir with my son.

This is a very grievous thing for Abraham. I think Abraham was in a hard place. He did not know what to do.

Verse 12, God came in the picture and said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad and because of thy bondwoman. In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice, for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation because he is thy seed.

Verse 14, and here's the hard part. And Abraham rose up early in the morning. He took bread and a bottle of water, gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder and the child and sent her away.

And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. This must have been very difficult for Abraham. Most of us don't have a very good picture of the wilderness.

When we think of the wilderness, we think of maybe an area of trees and brush that's not farmed or something like that. But if you ever drive through the Middle East, almost all you see is desert, brush, barren, sand, rocks and hills. That's the wilderness.

Ohab was longing for green grass. Two and a half weeks without green grass makes you so appreciated when you come back here and you have green grass again. Abraham, he sent Hagar away.

It was hot. It's warm over there. The sun bakes.

There was hardly any clouds. And she began to wander in the wilderness of Beersheba. I don't know how long her bread lasted.

I don't know how long her water lasted. But here she is, leaving this safe place of this tent, leaving this place where she had served as a maid, leaving this place where she had been taken as a wife, had born a son. And now she's rejected and abandoned and is driven out of the home with her son who's about 15 years old or 17 years old maybe.

And it speaks about him as a lad. And we think of a 16 or 17 year old. We think of a young man who's pretty strapping and tall.

But when you go to these third world countries or when there's not very much abundant food to eat, the children are sometimes very small. And a 17 year old might just be about this big, pretty spindly yet. And that's about what I would see to happen here.

This lad was pretty small yet. And here she is, driven out of her home, driven out of her place of safety, driven out of a place where she had a place of rest. She was guaranteed her food, her clothing.

And all she needed was in that home, in that house. And now she leaves all of that. And she walks away from that.

She is driven out. And her son with her. And the water was spent in a bottle and she cast the child into one of the shrubs.

It's not some nice tree that we think of. Traveling through the desert over there, you see a little shrub, just a scrubby little shrub out there in the desert. Just a few here and a few there.

Hardly any nice big trees. And so she takes this child. They're wandering in the wilderness.

And they're running out of water. They're running out of food. And they're thirsty.

And this child is crying. She takes him and she lays him under that shrub. And there he lies, crying pitifully, dying.

And Hagar turns her back on that boy and walks away. Because she can't bear to see him die. And she went and sat down over against him a good way off where a bow shot.

For she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him and lifted up her voice and wept. Such rejection.

Such abandonment. Verse 17 God heard the voice of the lad. Remember, his name means God hears.

Ishmael means God hears. And notice that it was the lad's cry that God heard. She was sitting over there about a bow shot away, weeping and crying.

The lad was laying under the brush, under the shrub, weeping and crying. God heard the voice of the lad. And the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven and said to her, What illeth thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.

Arise, lift up the lad and hold him in thine hand, for I will make him a great nation. In a time of desperate situation, here comes the angel of the Lord again and he speaks to her when hope is gone and she's desperate, they're thirsty, they're hungry, they're dying in the desert sand. And here this angel appears again and he says, Hey, Hagar, I will make him a great nation.

God's blessing. Verse 19 And God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water and she went and filled the bottle with water and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer and he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran and his mother took him, a wife, out of the land of Egypt which was her native land.

Abraham's difficulties. Let's think a little bit about Ishmael here. How must have he felt? Ishmael had been in his father's house, born of a patriarch.

Abraham was his father. But here he was cast out in one day, in a moment. He was taken from being a son to being a nobody.

He was taken from the only home he knew and was cast out. He was taken from being a son to a servant. After being cast out of his father's house, he found himself dying in the wilderness.

Hagar, his mother, couldn't bear the pain of seeing him die and she began to walk away. All the while, this young boy lay under that shrub dying and crying. He was not only physically in need, he was hurting emotionally.

He was rejected of his father. He was abandoned by his mother. He was left to die in the desert.

Fatherlessness. He was without a father. He grew up in a home where there was a father and Abraham, it seems like, turned his back on him and he rejected him and sent him out there.

His heart was broken with rejection. His soul was pierced with sorrow. Questions like, who am I? I'm no longer the servant.

I'm no longer the son of Abraham. I'm only the son of a servant. His image of a father was destroyed.

His image of a father was destroyed. Shattered. And his own mother left him.

His condition was so bad that she didn't want to watch him die. He'd been brought up learning about God. He'd been brought up seeing a father.

But now, where was this God that his father had taught him about? Even God, it seemed, had forsaken him. But the Bible says God heard his cry. God hears.

And then it says that God heard his cry and he spoke to Hagar and he showed Hagar a well of water. The well of water was there all the time. She just didn't see it.

She just couldn't see it. God opened her eyes and she saw the well of water. Four thousand years later, today, the Muslims, they are still people in the spiritual wilderness and crying out.

They are still hurting over the lack of a father. The cry is deeper and deeper than it's been before. They are unable to see the well of their salvation.

Jesus is the well of living water. But their eyes are blinded to it. They cannot see it.

They can't see that well of water. But God called to Hagar. When he heard the cry of Ishmael, he spoke to Hagar.

To that woman, he said, take some water and go and give it to your son. It took natural water to save his life. It will take living water to bring these Muslims to Christ.

God used the woman to give water to Ishmael to drink. God, he will also use another woman to give water to drink to Muslims. And that's the church.

And the church will just open her eyes to see the well of water. They will have water to give to the children of Ishmael. Amen? Ishmael is thirsting for living water today.

He's hungering after righteousness. He's seeking for a father. Very interesting.

I was on the banks of the Nile River there in Egypt one evening, visiting with about five young men who had come by. One of them had made a connection with one of our brothers before a year or so ago. He called that young man when he got there.

He had given this young man an Injil or a New Testament. He called and told him he's in Egypt again. He said, well, I'll come by to see you.

We went to the Nile there to meet them. Five young men came out. We spent about an hour and a half or two hours talking with them, sharing the gospel with them, sharing about Christ, the New Testament and so forth.

We had a very good conversation. Before we parted, my brother said, can we pray for you before you go? Oh yeah, you can pray for us. So I just lifted my eyes up into the starry night and I just said, Father in Heaven.

I addressed God as my Father. After I said Amen, I prayed for these young men that God would manifest Himself to them and show them His glory. When I said Amen, one young man popped the question immediately.

And this is the question he said, Why did you call God your Father? You see, the Muslims do not see God as a Father. They are fatherless. They've been rejected by a father.

The figure of a father is not understood in their spiritual perception of God. They do not believe that God is a Father. If they would, they could believe that He'd have a son.

If there's a son, there has to be a father. And so this whole thing is wrapped up together in the fact that they don't believe that God is a Father. And when he asked that question, it was such an opportunity just to go right through that open door and explain to him about my Father in Heaven and the love of the Father.

But this is what's missing in the life of Islam today. They have put it on. They have taken this fatherlessness, this cry of rejection, this cry of abandonment.

They've taken that and have tried to put something else to it. To understand the nature of the Muslim cry, we need to go back to the origin of this. And this is where it is.

Ishmael was rejected and abandoned by his father. And if you're here today and you have a poor father image, maybe your father has rejected you. Maybe you feel like your father has cursed you.

Maybe you are resting and struggling all of your life with your father issue. This is a reality. Because my father did this to me.

My father rejected me. My father abandoned me. And I know there's people here who are wrestling with that.

But let me say there's hope for you. There's hope for you. Is there hope for Ishmael? Is it? It is.

He was cast out of his father's house and left with no inheritance. Remember he was 15 years or so in his father's house. Grew up there having been taught of God.

Being the favorite in the home for years. Only he was the son of a bondwoman. Ishmael must have looked to his mother for explanation of what was happening only to find her reminding him that he was the son of a servant and had no father.

Ishmael waited in the wilderness hoping his father would come looking for him. Bring him some bread and water but his father never came. And the next time that you read about Ishmael and his father Abraham is when Abraham died.

Where Isaac and Ishmael go and they bury their father Abraham. And with that burial it signified the death of Ishmael's hope to ever be accepted or loved by his father again. My father will never love me.

My father will never accept me. And that lives on and on and on today. Muslims do not understand a father's love.

Muslims do not understand how God could be a father. At the core of the cry this cry of Ishmael is the desire to be loved by a father. Maybe you're here today and at the core of your heart there's a deep cry.

A desire to be loved by your father. Maybe you're here today and you're hurting and there's problems in your life. Is there a root issue of rejection and abandonment in your life? You don't know who you are.

There's a need for an identity. Without a father a son has no identity. Identity is not just about who you are but whose you are.

If you don't know whose you are you will never know who you are. And if you don't know your identity you will define yourself by what you do. Now listen carefully.

There are some who do not know the love of the father here this morning. And people are trying to prove who they are by what they do. Listen.

Are you trying to prove who you are by what you do? If that's the case then you don't understand what the father in heaven is all about yet. Are you trying to prove who you are by what you do? If you would have went down to the slave market in those days and you went if you go to buy a slave you don't care who his father is. You don't care who where he's from.

That's not important. But what is important is that this man would know how to work. You'd check his muscles out.

You want someone who's going to be able to work hard. And you would also want to know whether he is a submissive slave or not. These are the two important things when you go to buy a slave.

Is he strong? And is he submissive? But that's not the case if you're a son. We're not sold in the slave market. I have an inheritance.

My father's name is Stephen and I'm proud to be his son. Amen? I identify myself as his son. That's my identity.

A son can be traced by his DNA. But a servant is traced by his works. If you don't know whose you are you try to prove who you are by what you do.

Listen to that. And so what is very important in life is that I prove who I am by how well I do my work. Meticulously, maybe specifically, maybe all these type of things.

I'm trying to prove trying to get people's acceptance by doing. Ishmael was cast out without a father. Abandoned, rejected, fatherless.

The right his right as a son was an inheritance from his father. That right was taken away leaving him with a seal of fatherlessness. And that cry lives on in the hearts of Muslims today.

Centuries later the children of Israel have built a memorial around the cry of Ishmael and have called it Islam. Which means submit to God much like a servant. Rather than to have a relationship with God as a son.

And this is one thing that keeps coming up over and over again. We visit with many Muslims. Muslims love to talk about their religion.

If you don't talk about religion in the first 10-15 minutes when you're talking with a Muslim out there, you're probably missing the boat. But they love to talk about God. They love to share about their religion.

They love to try to talk to you about your religion. They want to know about your religion. They have lots of things and lots of questions in their minds.

But when you come down to the real facts of what they believe, they simply say we believe that we need to serve God. Islam means serving God. And you just kind of see them bowing down to be like a servant.

That's what Islam means. It means to serve God. And that's what they're doing.

They're trying to find their identity by serving. They're trying to prove that they are someone by doing. And brothers and sisters, that's not the way we come to Christ.

That's not the way it is for us. If you have been abandoned by your father, then there may be a deep cry in your heart like Ishmael, trying to prove who you are by doing something. Well, you know, there's this sense in the heart that if my father would just give me a blessing.

And so I try very hard to prove that I am worth something. I try to do these things to prove that I'm his son. But, sad to say, many fathers have left their children down.

They never give them a blessing. But I thank God for godly fathers. I hope every father in here knows how to give a blessing to his sons today and his daughters.

Islam they build a memorial around the cry of Ishmael called Islam which means to submit to God rather, like a servant, rather than to have a relationship with God as son. God is not a father to them. And God has no son.

Muslims still see themselves as servants and slaves submitting to God, hoping that through their works they can obtain acceptance and approval from God and avoid inevitable judgment. They seek to earn acceptance by God through works rather than grace. This is not just a moral code, but it's the state of

being of Islam.

Regardless, the cry of Ishmael has never ceased, but only grown deeper with time. Today the Muslim people, they're still in the wilderness, and they're still dying of hunger and thirst. They have no father to bring them bread and water.

At the same time, the church, this woman is walking away from them, unable to watch them die. And while this is happening, God is hearing the cry of Ishmael and of Islam. He will hear the cry of Ishmael, because it means God hears.

And God is hearing the cry of Islam these days. And he's calling for the church to open up their eyes and take the living water to them. That's the call on the church today.

God will be their father. He will give them bread. He will give them water through the church.

While these things have happened to Ishmael, while these things are, this is the state of being for Muslims, and even while this may have happened to you, yet God has made a way. There is hope. Ishmael has the glorious opportunity since Jesus Christ came and has taken down that middle wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile.

All Gentiles have the glorious opportunity to enter in to this glorious position as a child of God. God has made a way for Ishmael to come in again. God has made a way for Ishmael to be identified as a son of God again.

He has. And God has made a way for you and I. There is hope. If you are wrestling with this issue of fatherlessness, there's hope for you.

Maybe you feel like the son or daughter of a bondwoman, or of a slave. Maybe you feel like you've been cast out. But it is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that makes you a child and that brings you in.

It is through faith that we can be brought in. It is through faith that Ishmael can be brought in right into the very blessing of Abraham again. We read much about the blessing of Abraham coming upon the Gentiles.

This is a beautiful picture. This should be wonderful news to every Muslim in the world. That the blessing of Abraham, you can come into Abraham's family and household through Jesus Christ.

By faith. The blessing of Abraham. This is what Ishmael really wanted.

Ishmael has been longing for the blessing of Abraham for years. Four thousand years. And the blessing of Abraham is available to him.

It's available to you and me in this situation of fatherlessness. How does it work? God wants to bring you in to such a relationship with him that he can be your father. He says, come out from among them and be ye separate.

He says, and I will be a father to you and you shall be my sons and my daughters. Such glorious words to anyone who is resting with an issue of fatherlessness. God, the Father in heaven, he's saying, come in.

Partake of the blessing again. Partake of the blessing of Abraham. Which is Jesus Christ.

Though you were deprived of the blessing of Abraham, now in Christ Jesus you can enter in and be made the seed of Abraham. Be a partaker of the blessings of Abraham. And though you were a slave, now you can be an heir.

Though you were a servant, now you're called to be a son. In Christ Jesus. Though you were forsaken, though you feel like you're forsaken and without a father, and in the wilderness of life, God the Father is waiting for you to come.

By faith. And though you had no inheritance from your father, though your father gave all the inheritance to the other brothers and sisters, so be it! I've got Jesus Christ as my inheritance today. Amen? Now you've received the promise of the Father.

What's the promise of the Father? The promise of the Father is the Holy Spirit. All glory. Enter in, beloved! Come right on in.

The promise of the Father is what? It's the Holy Spirit. It's the power of God. It's the presence of God.

It's the reality of God in my life today. It's the Spirit of God working in me. Come, enter in! This wonderful, glorious promise through Jesus Christ.

Instead of the old covenant, you walk in the new covenant. We have received the righteousness of God without the law through faith. Not of worthless anyone should boast.

No, you don't get accepted by your work anymore. Cease from your labor. Cease from your work.

Cease from trying to be good. Stop trying to please your Father. Stop trying to do all these things so your Father would accept you.

Just stop! And enter in by faith, say, Father, I believe. Oh, taste and see that the Father is good. Taste and see that God is good.

I remember a testimony of a certain sister. She said when she got saved, she said it was wonderful to be saved and know that you're washed in the blood and so forth, but life still was not worth living until I met the Father. There was a deep void in her heart.

A deep void of fatherlessness. But when she met her Heavenly Father, that void was filled up. And there's rest.

And there's acceptance. And there's blessing. And there's inheritance in that.

Now, the Spirit of God is birthed in the heart. The glory on the mount was veiled in the face of Moses, but now, to me, the exceeding glory is unveiled in the face of Jesus Christ. We're no longer under the ministration of condemnation, but we're under the ministration of righteousness.

There's a book out there, the title says, I Dared to Call Him Father. The story of a Muslim lady in Iran, I believe it was. She was in a very wealthy, wealthy situation and had service to everything for her.

She was just a very empty, void, fatherless woman and had no... Barely went outside and things like that. Just lived in this real rich, wealthy place and somehow the Lord, by dreams and visions, showed her the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. It's interesting that Ishmael had an experience there, or Hagar, that the

angel would come to Hagar.

Is there a significance here or not? But many Muslims, they look for dreams and visions and for angels and God is manifesting Himself to them by visions and dreams many, many times. And this woman, in this book that is called I Dared to Call Him Father, she met the Lord Jesus Christ. She got saved and was full of joy and blessing and one day she was talking to a Christian and she didn't know about the Father yet.

And this woman said to her about God. This lady was trying to understand about God and then this Christian lady just mentioned to her, she said, Call Him your Father. Oh, that was a very difficult thing for her to do.

She didn't know. She didn't know. This is an issue with Muslims.

And she went home and she, in her, and before long she was able to come to that place where she dared to call God her Father. And she called on God and called Him her Father and immediately she met the love of the Father. And the Father ministered to her in her life.

Jesus also. He experienced abandonment and rejection for you and me. And if you're here today and you are wrestling with this issue, give your wrestling up.

Stop wrestling. But just give your feelings and your emotions of rejection and abandonment to Jesus Christ. He already has taken them with Him.

When He honed that cross, He took those with Him and nailed them to the cross. And they're already dealt with. And all you need to do is by faith transfer those things onto the cross of Christ and believe by faith that God is a Father who loves and who will accept me just as I am.

Let's turn to Ephesians 2 for a few scriptures here. Ephesians chapter 2 And you hath he quickened? Yes. Hallelujah.

Who were dead in trespass and sins, wherein in times past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in true and disobedient, among whom also we all had our conversation, our walk of life in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind, whereby nature, the children of wrath, even as others, but God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ by grace who you saved, and has raised us up together and made us sit together in heaven and places in Christ Jesus. What more do you need? What more do I need? That's what I need. I need to know that I've been accepted in this place.

Raised up with Him, made to sit together with Him, sitting with Him in His heavenly throne that in the ages to come we might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are you saved through faith and not of yourselves as the gift of God, not of works that any man should boast. We're His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.

You are His workmanship. You've been created in Christ Jesus. Unto good works which God hath before ordained that we, that you should walk therein.

Remember in times past Gentiles who were called uncircumcised by that which is called circumcision of flesh made by His, that at that time, remember you were without Christ. But now you are in Christ.

Remember you were an alien from the covenant of Israel, but now you are a partaker of the inheritance of Christ Jesus.

Strangers from the covenant of promise. Now you have a new covenant of promise for you and me. Having no hope.

That's the position of those of the Gentiles. But there is hope. Now we have hope.

And they also were without God, but were no longer without God. Are you still without God? Are you still at that place? But now in Christ Jesus, you who were sometimes far off are made nigh. What does that mean? Let's look at Ishmael.

Ishmael who was far off now has the opportunity to be made nigh in Christ Jesus. He has the opportunity to be brought into Christ Jesus. For He, Jesus, is our peace who made both one and hath broken down the middle wall partitioned between us.

And so forth. That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enemy thereof. Yes, Ishmael.

The middle wall is broken down. It's been abolished. The partition's been taken away.

Why? That you might be reconciled to God. What about you and I? Am I still without a Father? I remember a quote in closing that I wrote in school. I was probably in first grade.

You know how some of those things stick into your mind you learned in first grade way back there? Or maybe I read it in an old English book. I don't know. But this is the way I wrote it this morning.

Said the robin to the sparrow, Why do men rush about and worry so? Said the sparrow to the robin, Perhaps they have no Heavenly Father such as cares for you and me. The birds, the sparrows. The Bible says the Heavenly Father cares for them.

Not even one sparrow will fall to the ground, but the Father in Heaven sees and He cares. Of how much more value are you than a sparrow? You might think you're worthless this morning. You might think that there's no hope for you.

There is. There is. You don't have to work your way in.

In fact, you can't work your way in. But come in the house of the Father through faith. Through Jesus Christ.

And let God be a Father to you. He is a Father. He's a good Father.

He's a glorious Father. He loves. He's more than my earthly Father could ever be.

Well, may the Lord add His blessing. May you receive God's grace. May you learn how to walk in the love of the Father.

First thing you need to do is acknowledge I'm struggling with that issue. And open it up. And let someone come and tell you this is the way.

Walk in it. Let's bow our heads for prayer. Our Father.

Yes, our Father in Heaven. You invite us to come and call you our Father. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We've been told to come and ask whatsoever we will in Jesus' name. Believing we know that we shall have what we ask. That's beyond us to really comprehend, Father.

I come asking you, Father. Give life. Give bread to this congregation.

Give living water here this morning to some needy soul. To someone who is hurting. To someone who is dying.

To someone who needs a Father. Be a Father. You said that you are a Father to the fatherless.

Hallelujah. Take all glory and honor, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you for your attention. I was thinking also in prayer when you pray Jesus said, say our Father in Heaven. He's a Father.

How can you... Don't be like the Muslims just saying God this or God that. No. We have a relationship with a Father.

It's real. He's my Father. That should put the fire.

It should just bring every Christian to such joy and faith that God wants me to be His child. He wants to be my Father. And a Father's responsibility is what? To provide all the needs for all His children.

All His household. That's a Father's responsibility. And God wants to do that.

It's very clear in the New Testament. He wants to be our provision for every need we have. But oh so often we act like Ishmael.

We act like someone who has to work to earn their way. We act like someone who doesn't realize they have a Father. Said the robin to the sparrow, why do they rush about and worry so? The sparrow came back and said, it must be.

There's only one reason. Maybe they don't have a Heavenly Father such as you and I do. Oh God.

Oh Father. Thank you Emmanuel for that beautiful message. I was just thinking as I was sitting there wondering if there's somebody here today that while you were here, hearing those things about the Father and your heart is just reaching out for that.

Saying, I need that. I want that. And I just wanted to give an opportunity.

If there's somebody like that today, you'd say, I want to meet the Father like that. I need that. Why don't you come forward and to the door here and someone will help you to meet him.

Help you to come to him. Is there anybody like that? At last year's tent meetings not very many people came forward at the invitations. I was really blessed as I heard the testimonies last week and others before that of the people that God touched during that time.

There were at least, well last week alone there was two brothers that said they got saved listening on the phone. So if that cries in your heart, you don't have to come forward today. But get somebody who you

know knows the Father and talk to them.

Ask them. They'd love to show you how to come to him. Is there somebody God is speaking to that you have a testimony that you just really want to share? You feel like the Lord would have you share with us? Maybe there's somebody here who can give a testimony today of how God revealed himself to you as your Father.

We'll take a moment and have some testimonies. Is there anybody else? Right here. I just praise the Lord for revealing himself to me.

I've been a Christian for about seven years but it was only two years ago that I finally came to rest fully in my Father's love and experience it in a deeper way than I ever had. Spent some time in the wilderness. I spent a few days just in a cabin in the woods just seeking the Lord, just going through the Bible.

Literally going through the Bible. Just looking at verses that talked about God being a Father. And just crying out and seeking the Lord with the desperation to come to that place of rest and confidence that I don't need anything else.

Nobody. Nothing. Except God as my Father and my all in all.

He met me there. It just so changed my life. My life has never been the same.

And I just praise the Lord for meeting me there. Even though there was many hours of weeping and crying out to God and just going through those feelings of rejection and yet coming to that place of rest. So worth it to face the pain and the rejection and the feelings and just be honest to where I was at.

And then finding God to meet me right there. Praise the Lord. June 9th of this month, 25 years ago, I was just graduating from high school and I had gotten some injuries in sports and my hopes of a career in them was ended.

And a lot of what Emmanuel was sharing this morning was so true. Not only had my father left me, but several step-dads afterwards. Just a lot of rejection, but I was at a perfect place to hear the Gospel.

When someone said to me that God wanted to be my Father, it clicked. And I can remember that evening up in Estes Park, Colorado praying and receiving the Lord as my Savior. They'd given us a paperback Bible.

I'd never even owned a Bible. I remember holding that Bible to my heart and just looking up at the stars and walking through that camp saying, You're my Father. You're my Father.

I just couldn't get over it. I must have said it a hundred times that night. You're my Father.

I just kept holding that Bible to my heart. I think that the knowledge of God as a Father has been very solid from that day forth, but I'm learning 25 years later that my response to Him as a son is something that I'm not always clear on. And I find that as Paul, you preached with your vocation, I'm a dad.

I've put great stock in that too. And with that, I've also put stock in I'm a husband, because there was so much divorce. And also as boys, I suffered so much from the divorce.

And so I wanted to be a good husband and a good dad as part of my identity. And I can say over the years that when I failed in those areas, my understanding of making things right with God would be to show Him just how sorry I am. And that meant groveling and weeping and almost in a sense, turning my back on Him so I could feel absolutely alone and rejected and not do it again.

And even to the point where I think I have taken some pride in that. I remember when Brother Aaron was doing his illustration up there, the jug with the holes and the one that didn't have holes. And I've identified with the one without holes.

I'm not going to sin. I'm going to show you I can be a good son. You've done so much for me.

I'm going to show this. I'm going to pull myself up by the bootstraps. You know, the sad thing about a life like that is you get very preoccupied.

Did I sin today? You know, I better make up for it. I better feel bad. And that's not the life of a father and a son.

I think just recently, maybe I was at a place where I didn't have an excuse anymore because life has been such a blessing. I found myself still struggling with this sin of 25 years. And as God has shown me faithfully in the last five years, without fail, in a difficult time, seek the counsel of your elders, Jeff.

And so I know that Brother Mel and Brother Manuel have some experience in deliverance. And I thought, maybe this is a spirit. Maybe this is something that I just can't seem to beat.

And I find that when I'm struggling, I kind of pull into a shell. And my whole family can be there at the table. But where's Dad? Well, he's preoccupied.

He's hurting. And then I look at my precious wife, and I can see she's carrying the load by herself. And then, of course, the condemnation comes on.

This cycle just keeps going. So I met with Brother Mel and Emmanuel, and the Lord met me through them. And I want to share how Emmanuel was able to put his finger on that identity and my desire to be a good husband.

And how when I see my wife stumbling under that load because I'm absent, I can't help it. That's where the condemnation comes. And Emmanuel jumps right on it and said, Jeff, don't trust in oppression.

I thought, what do you mean? He was quoting a psalm. Trust not in oppression. I believe it's Psalm 62.

I looked up that verse. And it has the idea of there are spirits that oppress and distort our understanding of God the Father. And if we listen to those spirits, we can actually think that's the Holy Spirit saying, this is how you make things right so God will accept you.

And that's exactly what I was doing. Well, I knelt down and it was one of the hardest things I've had to do. I renounced that spirit.

And I can't quite explain it, but I was sweating and trembling in there in that office, trying to find the words to renounce the spirit. Because on the one hand, that's the spirit that kept me on the straight and narrow. I didn't want to sin because of the shame and the condemnation.

So it motivated me. But to hear Emmanuel and Mel say, that's not the Holy Spirit. What motivates you is God's mercy.

God's love. 25 years as a Christian, it was such a blessing. And it's been a blessing this week because the Lord's been tested a couple of times.

There's been a couple of times where through just being a mom of a big family, I've seen my wife struggling. I've asked, is it me? She said, no, I'm just having a hard time. And to see that there's not condemnation coming on me, but God's mercy, it makes me reach out.

I'm not in there trying to fix Jeff. I'm more tuned into my family. It's God's job to fix Jeff.

It's not Jeff's job to fix Jeff or to grovel. So I want to praise the Lord this morning, not only for the sermon, but for the discipling relationship that I'm growing in with my elders. Really the love I have for them is sort of big brothers and as fathers.

I would encourage somebody who's either listening, not here in the service, or in the service, if you're wrestling with a relationship with God as your father, even how the Holy Spirit is making you a son or a daughter, don't just go on with it. Seek help. Learn that Christianity isn't drudgery.

God didn't call us to be Ishmael's. We are sons of promise. There are so many great and precious promises in the Scriptures.

And I would just encourage you from my own testimony, there's freedom. There's deliverance. God does love us.

And even in the way He chases us, it's through love. Praise His name. Is there another hand? Another testimony? It's a real blessing to be back with y'all this morning.

We are a rich people. To have the fellowship and hear the good truths that we do every Sunday. God really blessed our family.

It was a real rich six months for me. But I also met some of God's children that don't have what we have. But it's been a blessing to be back with you all this morning.

I talked to my family this morning and they're sending their greetings. They're all doing very well. Keep praying for them.

They feel the reality of the battle. And they also wanted me to share the news with you that this morning my two sisters, Dorcas and Sarah, gave their hearts to the Lord. So we are rejoicing in that.

Keep praying for them. Amen. There's one in the back there.

Is this your first Sunday with us, Regina? We just want to welcome you here. It's a blessing to have part of the Rudolphs family with us. Pray to God we'll bless you, your time here.

I just want to thank the Lord for the message this morning. I just want to bless you, Emmanuel, for sharing it. I think it's well, at least for me, very needful.

It's actually seems like the second time this week I've heard a very similar message. I don't want to go long, but the Lord's doing similar things in my heart as Brother Jeff shared. So I just want to praise the

Lord for that.

It does seem that our understanding of the Heavenly Father is often misunderstood by what it may have been like in our home. And there's great freedom when you start to truly understand what the love of the Father really is.

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