

Genesis 16 - Shortcutting Faith

A test of delay:

1) Impatience and infidelity

(v1-4a)

2) Conflict and chaos

(v4b-6)

3) Grief and grace

(v7-16)

For further discussion

- How do you cope with waiting for things? When is it hard? Why? What promises of God are hard to wait for? Why?
- In v1-3, what is wrong with Sarai's scheme? How does it echo Adam and Eve in Genesis 3? How are we tempted to similar shortcuts? In what ways do we try and make the end justify the means? Is that ever right?
- In v4-6, how is this a picture of the chaos that results from sin? Hagar's name is ignored in v6 - how does sexual sin impersonalise the other person?
- In v7-16, how is the Angel of the Lord's treatment of Hagar surprising? How is the future for Ishmael better than expected? Nevertheless, how will the consequences of Abram's failure play out for generations to come?
- What hope is there for us in the face of our own shortcutting and failures, past or present? How does the story of how God cared for the outsider encourage us? How does Jesus' own resistance to the temptation to shortcut faith help us (see Luke 4:1-13)?