

Sermon: “Like Isaac; I Wanna Be Like Isaac”

Text: Genesis 17:15-27 (pew Bible page 12)

I. Isaac: A demonstration of God’s special grace (in spite of Abraham’s doubt).

A. God’s special grace: from Sarai to Sarah

Genesis 17:15 “God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah.”

B. God’s special grace to Abraham through Isaac

Genesis 17:19 “Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.”

II. Ishmael: A demonstration of God’s common grace (in spite of Abraham’s despair)

Genesis 17:20-21 “And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac...”

Matthew 5:44-45 “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

III. Paul: A declaration that goes beyond Isaac and Ishmael concerning our experience of grace.

Galatians 4:22-28 “For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written,
“Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband.”
Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.”

A. The circumstances of Ishmael’s birth

B. The circumstances of Isaac’s birth

C. The meaning for us today:

1. Ishmael – the religion of natural, human effort unaided by any grace or promise from God

2. Isaac – the religion of a supernatural work by God based on His promise of grace.

Ephesians 2:1-5 “You were dead...but God ...made us alive!”

“Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.” Gal. 4:28

IV. A dedication to live by faith

Genesis 17:23 “On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him.”