

Sermon Summary | Sunday 9th August 2026 | Sarai & Hagar

Genesis 16 is an ancient story, but its heart is painfully current. It is a story about waiting, disappointment, control, hurt, and the longing to be seen.

God had promised Abram a great family, but years had passed and Sarai still had no child. The promise of God felt slow. Waiting became painful. And under that pressure, Sarai took matters into her own hands. She gave Hagar, her Egyptian servant, to Abram, trying to secure by human control what God had promised to give by grace.

But waiting turned into taking, and taking turned into wounding. Hagar was used. Sarai was wounded and became harsh. Abram failed to act. Hagar, once pregnant, looked with contempt on Sarai. There is no morally simple family in Genesis 16. The Bible does not divide the world neatly into innocent sufferers and guilty sinners. It shows us wounded sinners and sinning sufferers — and then, wonderfully, the God who sees truly.

When Hagar fled into the wilderness, the angel of the Lord found her. That matters. In Abram and Sarai's eyes, Hagar had become a solution, a servant, a womb, and then a problem. But to the Lord she was a person. He spoke to her, named her child, and gave her a future. Hagar then gave the Lord this name: *"You are a God of seeing."*

That is both comforting and searching. Most of us long to be seen. We want someone to notice our pain, understand our story, and care about what has happened to us. But we are also afraid to be seen truly. We want God to see our wounds, but not always our sin; our suffering, but not the ways we have wounded others; our anguish, but not our pride, resentment, or unbelief.

Yet the God who sees comes near in mercy. He is not indifferent to hidden suffering. He is not deceived by respectable sin. He sees the whole truth, and still he moves towards us in grace.

The promise will not be secured through Sarai's control, Abram's failure, or Hagar's child. God will give the promised son in his own time and by his own grace. And ultimately, Jesus Christ is the true promised Son, given not by human manipulation, but by the gracious initiative of God.

He sees sinners and sufferers truly — and he comes near. At the cross, he enters the deepest wilderness of all, bearing our sin and shame, so that those who are guilty, wounded, overlooked, and afraid may find mercy.

So Genesis 16 is not simply a warning against taking control, though it is that. Nor is it simply a comfort to the overlooked, though it is that too. It is an invitation to come honestly before the God who sees. We do not need to tidy ourselves up before coming to him. We do not need to pretend our wounds are small or our sins are harmless. In Christ, the God who sees us truly is also the God whose grace is deeper than all he sees.

Questions for personal reflection

1. Where am I tempted to take control because God's promise, timing, or provision feels too slow?
2. What would it mean for me to come honestly before the God who sees — with both my wounds and my sin?