



**Go Deeper, 25<sup>th</sup> June. Seek Together, Hagar and Peace**

Dear Miners,

I hope you enjoyed the sermon slot this week, a slightly new format I'm calling 'Seek Together,' because we're called to Seek God, to Seek Comfort, to Seek Truth, and to do all this Together. If you weren't with us, here's what happened, as it's not all on the video!

The first passage we heard this week was from Genesis 21, verses 8-21. The story of Hagar being thrown out of Abraham's camp with her son Ishmael. At the 9:15 we also heard a passage from Matthew, chapter 10 verses 24-39. As we only looked at Hagar's story at the 11, I'll concentrate on that here.

Just like in the service, a great place to start is reading the passage and asking yourself 'what's hard here?' – what don't I understand, what don't I like and why don't I like it? [Here's a link to the passage online.](#) Then ask 'where's the good news here?' There's always some!

- Much of the hardness is the way Hagar and Ishmael are treated, used and cast aside when inconvenient. Part of the good news is in how they are seen and cared for by God. While we can be thankful FOR good things, we are thankful for God and his presence IN hard times. Can you think of a time this has been true?
- I found one hard thing was how judgemental I was of Sarah, casting Hagar aside in jealousy. Certainly not a kind act, but Sarah was also a victim in this situation. Hard passages in scripture can point us to areas of yourself where God would love to see and help us grow.
- I cherish these hard passages, they bring to us the voices of the marginalised and the way they are treated. I love that the Bible, especially the Hebrew Bible, shares so much of this. This was deeply countercultural, and speaks to us of how all are seen and valued. Are there any other hard stories you have come across in the Bible? Can you be grateful to hear them, and allow them to prompt you to anger and action? The stories and events are never good news, yet their telling and retelling are vital for shaping God's people.

We'll do this again, let me know how we can improve it. Would it be helpful to let you know in advance which bit of the Bible we'll be doing? I also suspect we should stick to one passage not two.

Every Blessing

Rob



St Wilfrid's Calverley

Loving God, Loving Calverley, Growing Together.

### Deeper Stuff

I found my [Jewish Study Bible](#) of help, as ever with Old Testament passages.

Rachel Held Evans' work was enlightening. Her chapter on Hagar from the book [Inspired](#) was both heartbreaking and encouraging. Some other reflections from her on the dark passages of scripture is also helpful:

<https://rachelheldevans.com/blog/dark-stories>

Honestly – read everything she wrote!

Tim Keller posted this sermon on Hagar. Confession time, I haven't listened to it yet, but I trust Tim, who died recently. <https://podcast.gospelinlife.com/e/hagar-and-the-son>