Sermon Title: “God has a plan and you have a part to play”

Scripture: Gen 16 – The Story of Sarai and Hagar

Warm up and extemporaneous thoughts:

- See the exceptional "Sit With Me" video
- Embrace the change that feels so good when you are in a small group - join an eGroup
- This week's Verb: Transform – learn to be real with people in a small group setting. Join an eGroup
- Pastor Steven's solo: Bow Down Before Him and My Emanuel (unplanned guest singing by Pastor Joel
- Pastor Steven: Clap your hands and give him praise. It is good and fitting to praise you God in a way that will testify to you.
- This worship is not a funeral - He is alive.

Gen 16: The story of Sarai and Hagar

- We as a church are not done discussing the subject of frustration.
- There are right ways and wrong ways to deal with frustration. Many deal with frustration in many forms.
- In fact, you are sitting next to a frustrated person - whatever the form.
- Last week, Paul says learn to deal with frustration so that you can realize your full destiny. You might as well sit down with a cup of coffee and say Hello frustration – what are you trying to teach me today?
- In Chap 16, Abram has been waiting for 10 years after God made a covenant with him. Now the wife of Abram is dealing with the frustration of delays.
- Two issues with delay: a. is there something else that I can do? or b. Is it going the direction you want to go?
- Dealing with delays can be frustrating. Anything that God creates that is meant to great is the result of a messy process.
- This is why the highway signs say "Expect Delays."
- God speaks to Adram's destiny and then things go quiet for 10 years.
- Sarai had an Egyptian slave as a back-up plan since she could not have a child.
- Perhaps Abram can build a family around her?? However, you can do the wrong thing with the right desire. The heart could be in the right place but you could still implode if your hands are in the wrong place.
- **A Pastor Steven Classic:** We bring solutions but God only wants our submission.
- WE try to force our manufactured destiny to the surface.
- This is not a biblical sex scandal. It was common culturally but not necessarily correct.
- See 16:2: Abram is not helping manage the situation: "Well I guess I will take one for the team!" Ya Right.
- In the context of this (10 years in the land of Canaan), this represents right motive but motive but wrong move.
- What they produced was a son called Ismael.
- You can do the wrong thing and it worked.
- One thought concerning frustration: We say; I tend to want to take over when things are not getting produced at the desired rate - where you want to help God out a bit. (Ooops!)
- How you experience delays will determine your destiny.

1. The controlling choice:
- Are you a control freak? Some are wired to control more than others.
- For Sarai, Hagar, and Abram: When circumstances were outside of their control and they lost it
- Hagar has to carry something that she did not to commit to.
• See 16:5. “Now the slave despises me.” We have 2 or 3 very frustrated folks in the text. We can guess that God is frustrated since he has to deal with the people that tried to take over the situation.

• Sarai is trying to deal with something that is out of her control.

• Pastor Steven Classic: We need to accept more choice vs control.

• God says: Control is an illusion and we overestimate the amount of control that we have

• One other source of frustration: Abram is not accepting responsibility

• Pastor Steven Classic: We grow something out of frustration which then turns into something that we eventually resent.

• There are two ways to deal with frustration: a. we force or b. We flee (Sarai or Hagar) If we can’t wait for a baby, so let’s make a baby? Are you forcer or a flee-er?

• Hagar says: I don’t have to deal with this situation. When life gets unfair - some of us have the habit of fleeing.

• See 16:8: God is revealing to Hagar: What two questions are asked? She answers one correctly and she fumbles the second question. Where did you come from and where are you going? She does not yet know where she is going.

• A Pastor Steven Classic: Many of us are defined by what we are running from not where we are going.

• The Angle of Lord says: Go back to your misery and submit. See Gen 16:9.

• A Pastor Steven Classic: God is more interested in your submission than he is your solutions.

• You may not control it but you have choices. How will you respond is your choices.

• It is a choice to do the little things with integrity.

• You make the choice to embrace or run.

• The Angle tells Hagar: Go back to your misery and situation. Sometimes God will send you to places so that you birth what God wants you to bring forward.

• If you go back, God says: I will increase you decedents beyond what you can count.

• God says this is going to be a fruitful frustration.

2. Blinding Blame:

• Hagar got pregnant with a baby that she did not want. As long as she was blaming, she could not see God.

• See Gen 16:13.

• God says: If you stop blaming, I will start blessing.

• When you stop blaming, you will see God.

• Submission comes before the solution.

• God says I need you birth what is in side of you so that the promise can be revealed. You shall name him Ismael.

• The same misery that drove you out to the wilderness represents a future promise.

• God says, I am going to make you fruitful in you frustration.

• See Gen 16:13: When she stopped blaming others, her eyes were opened.

• Some of us can see the blessing once we get right of all of the blame games

• God says: What game to want to play? The blame game or the blessing game.

• Do you run from the revelation? What Hagar was carrying now becomes a blessing.

3. Redeeming Regret

• It takes a lot of time and patience to see how God works. 13 years later Abraham and Sarah had their own son.

• God will continue to deliver the promise – even with our own bad choices.
• The thing they did on their own was still turned into a blessing by God.
• God cannot redeem the regrets that you do not release. You will only repeat the cycle of frustration.
• You can still have Isaac. Literally means laughter. God says I am going to have the last laugh. You can still celebrate.
• God had to send Ismael into the world.
• Everyone in the Bible made a mistake. God then uses the mistake for a greater purpose.
• Three generations later the importance if Ishmael is realized. Abraham is the pro-generator. Joseph was the preserve-er of God’s chosen people. He was abused and left for dead by his brothers. However something happened. See Gen 37:25: The Ishmaelites saved Joseph so that he can lead in Egypt, store lots of food, and save the Hebrew people. God has to find him a way to get to Egypt.
• God used the Ishmaelites to serve this greater purpose.
• **A Pastor Steven Classic:** God incorporates the Isaacs and the Ishmaels in your life.
• It is all part of the plan.
• God is so great that even the bad decisions turn into good things.
• God says, I am going to use your bad decision to redeem it and turn to good. “Look, here comes the caravan.”
• See Gen 37:28. It was the mistake that led to the miracle.
• **Pastor Steven Classic:** Yes, bad decisions have consequence; and bad decisions are never beyond redemption.
• You only have time to move forward. God says: I am carrying you to Egypt.
• God says put me center of your life and all will be well.
• God can use "that" too and it is all part of the plan.
• God says: I am an awesome God. We serve a god that makes the most of our mistakes
• Jesus had to go through Judas to get to the cross.
• Also recall Peter: He was dismayed watching Jesus die on the cross. However, his frustration and dismay were dismissed on the 3rd day. The dismay was actually a miracle in disguise.