

Our Way, God's Way, and the Fruit  
Galatians 4:21-24  
Pastor Jason Huffman  
7/3/22

**Have you ever taken a shortcut to get what you wanted?**

It wasn't illegal and other people do it.

But deep down you knew, it was a mistake or compromise for you?

The goal was good, but the way you got there wasn't.

**Years ago, we got an offer for a free vacation...**

*...and all you had to do was listen to a three hour presentation.*

We didn't have much money, we wanted a vacation, so why not.

*Something about it felt off, but we thought we could make it work.*

We go down to this janky little office with a handful of other people.

It is awkward...But we wanted that vacation...

So we stayed and listened and listened and listened.

Presentation, personal conversations, pressure tactics...

...We made it out without buying anything...

...and we got what we wanted or so we thought!

...We got the voucher!

**But then we tried to redeem the voucher.**

Calls, forms, hoop after hoop. We pushed on and on.

It was a total pain.

Deb even had to go to the bank where they told her...

...“ya they make it like this purposely.”

We were irritated and frustrated...and we finally gave up.

What we wanted was good, a vacation.

We were trying to work the system and get what we wanted.

And...It was a total bummer.

**Now another time**, Deborah was doing her job, being a great employee and she was given an award.

We ended up with a vacation at a beautiful resort in Kauai.

There was no scheming, no stress, she was just doing her best at her job, serving customers, and it was a gift and a blessing.

**That is like the comparison in my mind to *my way and God's way.***

**...One is flesh, the other is faith.**

**The life of the flesh often involves stress, manipulating people or circumstances, and basic scheming.**

**The life of faith involves trusting God's will and doing it God's way  
...It takes knowledge, faith, and patience, and brings blessing... ...not the stress, manipulation or scheming of the flesh.**

BIG IDEA:

**God's will done God's way brings good fruit.**

**God's will done our way brings bad fruit.**

This is like the story in Galatians Paul is going to use as an example...

Galatians 4:**21** Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? **22** For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. **23** But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, **24** which things are symbolic.

God promised Abram a son and a family as numerous as the stars.

**God made this promise when Abram was 75 and his wife was 65.**

It was promised by God...but after some time...still no son.

*There was the pressure of wanting a child, the desire of fulfilling God's purpose, and their biological clocks were ticking!*

**After ten years...Sarah is impatient and has an idea.**

Sarah suggests that Abraham take her Egyptian servant Hagar.

- Egypt is a type of the world in Scripture.
- A servant from Egypt is a type for bondage to the world's ways

This should have been a red flag for Abraham.

This should have been a hard no...marry your servant girl? Uh nope.

**But Abraham takes the servant, she gets pregnant and has a son**

Now on the surface it might look fine.

*God promised a son, they waited for ten years, it wasn't happening... ...Sarah and Abraham hatch a little DIY plan and make it happen.*

**...But...We don't fulfill God's promises our own way.**

**God's will done His way brings good fruit.**

**God's will done our way brings bad fruit.**

**There are things you can do that look fine on the surface...**

**...but underneath they are flawed.**

**...And over time and development fruit is revealed.**

God's promise was for Abraham to have a child.  
God's way was for Abraham and his wife to have that child.

**We know God's way because of His word.**

**If you want good fruit, plant good seed.  
God's word is the seed that we plant by faith for good fruit.**

Abraham and Sarah have seemed to solve the problem for God.

**They think they solved a problem...**

**...but what they did was create more problems = bad fruit.**

- The servant, Hagar, is pregnant and treats Sarai with contempt.
- This doesn't go over well, and Sarai gets jealous.
- Sarai blames Abraham, "this is all your fault!"
- Abraham says, "she is your servant do whatever you want with her."
- Sarai treats her so badly Hagar runs away.

But in His grace, God appears to Hagar.

The Lord encourages her and assures her that she will be blessed.

**Hagar called the Lord, El Roi, "the God who sees me".**

What a beautiful moment of grace...

She knows God sees her.

He sees us too...our struggles, our pain, our mistreatment... ..He is with us.

**God tells her to return home and gives her son a name: Ishmael.  
It means God will hear.**

*He also tells her, Ishmael will be like a wild donkey...*

*... hostile with everyone.*

*...He is going to cause some problems.*

***But Hagar, this Egyptian servant, trusts and obeys God even though it would be hard to go back to that home!***

...By faith in the God who sees, she plants the seed of obedience.

---

**Maybe you want something...**

**...a house, a spouse, a mickey mouse vacation.**

**Or maybe there is trouble, difficulty, or drama...**

**...and you just want it to end.**

- You are tempted to scheme or cut corners or run away.
- You are tempted to do what everyone else is doing.
- You are tempted to make it happen on your own.

Some examples...

**You want this person to know you love them, so you decide to sleep with them or move in together...**you know it is wrong, but it feels right.

**You want a deal to work out, so you stretch the truth or bury the numbers...**you know it is wrong, but it seems like the only way to get the job done.

**You want a good job so you have to get into a good college, so you are taking so many classes you are buried without time for anyone or anything else,** but you have to get into the right school.

**You are having difficulty or drama so you run away or quit the job or avoid the issue or cut off the person.** You know it is not right, but you just can't take it.

**You want the nice house or the nice car like everyone else has,** you go so deep into debt you can't sleep at night.

**You want the friendship to grow,** so you only tell them what they want to hear, but you know you are not building trust.

***There are any number of good things we can want...  
...but when we are scheming or compromising our values...  
...or straining relationships or hiding our faith...  
...or running away, we are headed for bad fruit.***

AND...

**13 years of difficulty later and God restates His promise.**

Abraham says, uh ya, Ishmael live before you!

...God says, no.

...You will have a son with Sarah.

**Abraham is incredulous...how can this happen!**

He is gonna be 100! Sarah is 90.

It is not biologically possible for Abraham and Sarah to have a child.

But that doesn't stop God.

**God's purposes are dependent on His ability, not ours.**

**We can trust God's purposes, God's timing and God's way.**

We don't need to work things out for ourselves...

... we need to wait on the Lord for direction.  
...We need to trust His will, His way.

**Let's be clear, you can do it your way, but you will have to pay.**

There is a price when we do things our own way.  
You have heard of the "dumb tax"...  
...there is also the "fleshly fruit bill".

**The difficulties with Hagar and problems with Ishmael were real.**

Ishmael and his descendants would become a problem for centuries.  
Ishmael later becomes a prominent man in Arabia and the Arabs become part of his  
bloodline.

**So when God appears again and Sarah is there.**

Sarah hears His promise and laughs!

She is 90 years old, she is past bearing kids, she waited, she worked it out herself, I'm  
sure she regrets it...but to have a child now?!  
...What a joke!

But they do.

**They name him Isaac which means laughter, because Sarah laughed but also  
because he was a joy in her life.**

**There is real joy when we let God work and He fulfills His purpose His way!**

God's way brings peace.

God's way brings power.

God's way brings joy.

God's way brings health.

God's way brings blessings.

But Ishmael, this wild donkey is a teenager, and he is a jerk.

**Getting ready to celebrate a special day for Isaac, Sarah sees Ishmael making fun  
of Isaac and she can't take it anymore.**

For years this had gone on and she was done.

Abraham is upset because Ishmael is his son.

But God confirms that it is time to send Hagar and Ishmael out.

This is a hard word to obey, but here, now Abraham obeys the Lord.

**There are times boundaries have been crossed, wounds are too deep, or the fruit  
is so bad...the relationship needs to end.**

There is not a healthy way to move forward, and it needs to end.

It doesn't mean that God's involvement would end.  
God was still at work, but Abraham and Sarah are no longer involved.

God's word is the seed that we plant by faith for good fruit.  
And sometimes the seed is hard to plant.

**This hard obedience would lead to blessing for both families.**

- So we have Sarai and Abram who tried to work things out in the flesh and get a son but a lot more problems along with him.
- We have Hagar who finds that the Lord sees and hears her in her distress and then trusts Him enough to obey.
- We have Abraham who compromises with Hagar earlier but obeys God's direction to send Hagar and Ishmael her son away.

**Paul will use this story as a backdrop next week to continue his case as we look at the fight for faith freedom good fruit.**

**God's way involves trust and obedience and often waiting.**