



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

June 17, 2020

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 24

Father's Day – Boldness

By Mr. Bryan Bothwell

Please read Genesis 21: 8 – 21.

This is probably not the Bible passage we would seek out to celebrate Father's Day! Neither does it immediately epitomize our popular conception of "boldness"; and today we are exploring the boldness with which we must live by, daily, if we would follow and serve Christ.

Sarah's singular focus on the 'inheritance' Abraham would leave quickly dominates the opening of today's Scripture, tossing into oblivion any import of the "great feast" that Abraham had tried to host in celebration of that milestone in the life of his and Sarah's only child. The baby had survived his then quite critical time to his weaning. So a feast of thanksgiving was indeed in order. Even more so in the case of this child, Isaac, born when his mother was 90 years old, 'well past childbearing age', the Bible emphasizes. Such an implausible eventuality in the natural course of human capabilities that they had both chuckled in irony and disbelief when God had told them that was what was to happen. So God had upbraided them on their breach of faith, asking, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" and told them the baby was to be called Isaac, which means, "he laughs". But instead of the joyous laughter of love that parents and children share at such celebrations, this feast is remembered for the anger of the mother and the pain that brought to the father – and at least two others.

Exactly what Ishmael was doing at the time is not known. Biblical scholars tell us that the word in our text translated as "was mocking" can also mean simply "at play" or even "laughing" and, therefore, could also mean 'playing as if he were Isaac' or 'playing with Isaac'. Jewish scholars considered various implications of this, so the apostle Paul states in Gal. 4:29 that Ishmael "persecuted" Isaac. Perhaps what Ismael was doing was not the key to Sarah's outburst. On this Father's Day, one thing we do know is that right through to today, circumstances like this particular family can create a lot of disharmony; and settings like this feast, with two young children, their two mothers and their one father, with whom both women are still in a relationship, can see serious hurt, anger, jealousy, and rash actions. It is not the ideal God has planned.

Scholars seem agreed that the "inheritance" Sarah was so jealous about was not the same as what God intended to pass on to the world from Abraham. Indeed, the Good News Bible quotes Sarah's words as, "Send this slave and her son away. The son of this woman must not get any part of your wealth, which my son Isaac should inherit." Material aspirations did not come anywhere near to that on which God was focused (which parents today should heed). God's concern was the inheritance of the purity of faith of Abraham in the one and only God. For that would bring "all peoples" back to what God had made humans to be, when He had "blessed them" and declared "all that He had made ... very good". (Gen 1:28/31)

God was looking way beyond Sarah's vision in every way, for the integrity of the soul is more important than the earthly needs of human beings, as essential and life-enhancing as material sufficiency is. But let us make no mistake about it, God has provided abundantly for the earthly needs of everyone and does not tolerate forever when people are deprived of such sufficiency. Note the clear message of the Manna, when those heirs of Abraham were being led out of slavery in Egypt. (Yes, that too was part of that inheritance, as God had explained to Abraham!) Then the commands before they were allowed to pass into the Promised Land, where (Deut. 15:4) "..., there should be no poor among you, for in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, He will richly bless you, if only you fully obey the Lord your God and are careful to follow all these commands ..."

Of course God knew not everyone would obey, so He also gave them detailed instructions for looking after the poor, as well as their laborers and the foreigner. And, if anyone is wondering, because of what Abraham faced, there were also instructions to protect the earthly inheritances between children of different wives, and prohibiting the sacrificing of children.

We cannot ignore either that the descendants of Ishmael were also included as inheritors under God's plan that through Abraham "all peoples on Earth will be blessed" (Gen 12: 3). This was a mighty purpose. As Rabbi Yehuda Shurpin notes, "the relationship between G-d and His people is one that transcends the natural and the rational". Hence, not only did God take a long time readying Abraham, the blessing would flow only through Isaac, born by patently Divine intervention. It would not be done through Ishmael (Gen 17: 21), who had been conceived and born in the natural process, in a plan instigated by Sarah, who now accepted no responsibility for the welfare of the surrogate she had used, or of the child.

Against the human bleakness as we see intruding on the Abraham story, do we have the boldness to be the disciples of

Christ, in Whom, by an even more miraculous event, out of the descendants of Isaac, God completed His ultimate opportunity for “all peoples” to be saved? The boldness of spirit? As well as of mind, humility and will? Boldness to ‘get up early in the morning’, like Abraham did in today’s account, without giving into his pain and discomfort from such obedience to God, and, every day, ‘take up the Cross’ (Luke 9:23)?

With Covid-19 we have seen again the stark reality of the pandemic of poverty in which so many people around the world exist, so that in what we call ‘natural’ disasters, those who suffer the most are the poor, contrary to God’s explicit precept. Thank God Cayman’s health measures have worked great. Yet, within days of ‘lock down’ distressing numbers of people had no food. Even many hard working people had nothing put aside for a rainy day, because we have allowed the ‘insurgence’ of those bleak disparities we see in our national wages. That growth of the Sarah mentality of hogging the riches leaves many who have been integral to our endeavours wandering in ever more low paying jobs, which provide neither sufficient shade nor sustenance.

Surely Christ’s disciples must drink deeply of Him now and strive with boldness, as He would, to not only assuage the immediate hunger, but to reveal the well of Living Water. And to empower people for a dignified future, able to harvest from God’s material as well as spiritual abundance. For both, we should borrow from the apostle Paul, ensuring everyone is “equipped to carry his own load, even as we help to bear each other’s burdens” (Gal 6:5, 2) - and to be careful we do not confuse these two.



On Father’s Day

- Dear Dad, we just wanna say we love you and we miss you everyday so we send a thousand hugs and a thousand kisses to you in Heaven. Happy Father’s Day. **(Savannah UC)**
- Fathers play an important role in their children’s life because fathers are central to the emotional being of their children. He is a pillar of strength, support and discipline. **(George Town Charge)**
- He is a fighter, overcomer. **(WB Charge)**
- I love my father, he is nice, courageous, smart and brave. He always believes in me and even when I do wrong he gives me a second chance. Dad if and when you see this I hope you will always know this.... I Love You **(Robert Young UC)**
- My dad has been a great impact in my life by supporting my brothers and I in different ways as much as he can, in our everyday life's. No one can replace the love and support he gives to us every day. I thank God that I got the chance to have someone as great, amazing, funny and adventurous

as he is. And I want everyone to know that you are my number one dad. Love you forever. **(East End/Gun Bay Charge)**

- Father-daughter time with sports – some of the best times. **(WB Charge)**
- A good father understands that his children are human and that making mistakes is a part of growing up. **(George Town Charge)**
- He is unafraid, or doesn’t allow his fear to restrict him. **(WB Charge)**
- To my father I say, thank you. Thank you being there, for being my father figure. You have been an experience of a life time, even though you are not here, those memories will stay with me forever. **(East End/Gun Bay Charge)**
- His wisdom – just practical wisdom that comes from life experiences. **(WB Charge)**

On the COVID-19 experience

- We should always trust God no matter what situation we're in. **(BT/NS Charge)**
- The corona period has been a unique experience for me because I've been at home for a longer period of time than I have before. Staying home has been relaxing for me, but on the contrary, schoolwork has become more stressful. **(Savannah UC)**
- The corona virus is a very dangerous sickness that can be transmitted by contacts. As for now there is no vaccine to cure it. We can avoid it by washing our hands, social distancing, using masks, stay home and go out when needed. **(East End/Gun Bay Charge)**
- The Covid-19 is a mortal sickness, it affects our seniors, so that is why we need to take care of our grandparents. Hypertensive people are very vulnerable to this pandemic; it is good to treat before it reaches our lungs. Wash your hands and keep social distancing. **(East End/Gun Bay Charge)**
- The impact Covid-19 has on me is that I miss having fun with my friends and being unable to go out and enjoy the atmosphere. **(Savannah UC)**
- There are other ways we can use to learn and that it is a time of reflection given to us. **(BT/NS Charge)**



CIRMC Frontline Workers

BODDEN TOWN / NORTH SIDE CHARGE

Ernie Sherieff - CUC
Brandi Kay Sherieff - H. M. Customs

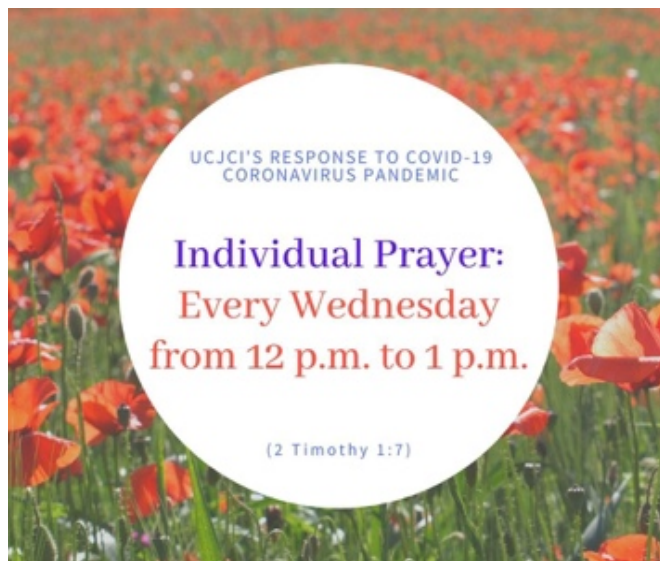
For All
You
and
Your Colleagues
Are Doing
to Help
Our
Communities
and Our
Island Nation



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

June 21. Mr. Bryan Bothwell

June 21. (Sunday) 3rd Sunday after Pentecost
Local United Church Worship Services will be
distributed via video links.



Online Public Forum



COVID-19 Now & Then

CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

Panelists



Theology & Ethics

Rev. Donovan Myers
Minister
John Gray Memorial
United Church



Psychology

Dr. Alexandra Bodden
Clinical Psychologist
UCCI



Economy & Finance

Mr. Woody Foster
Managing Director
Foster's

Moderator: Ms. Angela Martins

FOR A QUICK AND EASY ACCESS TYPE IN
YOUTUBE SEARCH:
Forum: 'Covid: Then & Now'

**A GOOD FATHER
IS ONE OF THE MOST
UNSUNG,
UNPRAISED,
UNNOTICED,
AND YET
ONE OF THE MOST
VALUABLE ASSETS
IN OUR SOCIETY**

Billy Graham