

Bible reading Genesis 21:8-21

Hymn 519- Singing-The Faith- *Father I place into your hands*

Genesis 21: 8-21

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, 'Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.' The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named after you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down

opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, 'Do not let me look on the death of the child.' And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.' Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt

New International Version (NIV)

Reflection

What a sad story in our lectionary this week. The story of Hagar and Ishmael bring tears to my eyes. The pain of being rejected is unbearable. The idea of knowing that you are a misfit is painful, horrible and unimaginable. As a social worker I worked with children who told their stories of being adopted or fostered. The stories brought tears to my eyes. I listened, I tried to assure the children that all

will be well. How easy was it to tell Hagar that all was well when she was told to pack her bags and go where, only God knows? I visualised Hagar walking the painful journey to nowhere. The bible says Hagar wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. She got to a point of desperation with no water or food to give the child, she abandoned the child under a bush to die and she sat opposite to watch the child because she had reached a breaking point. Haven't some of us mentally been to Beer-sheba after feeling rejected with no food, drink or people to talk to. Sometimes asking why me? Sometimes we wondered what sort of God would let something like this happen to His people? When Hagar could not bear it anymore she let go the child which was more of a burden to her at that time than a treasure. Hagar abandoned the child in surrender Hymn 519, "Father I place into your hands the things I cannot do". We should surrender all our concerns and things we care for into God's hands. Hard and painful as it was for Hagar, there was consolation, God asked Hagar what's paining? "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid. Haven't we felt rejected by being on our own during lockdown. Some did not have enough food, enough warmth and enough love. When life has thrown us in the deep end and we are not sure what else to do. Our God sees and knows. God opened

Hagar's eyes and showed her a well which she drank from. Our God is a God who sees, when the world rejects us God is near to those who are broken hearted. Be of good cheer and know the Lord is near. Hallelujah!

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for being an all knowing, all seeing and all hearing God. You found us when life had thrown us at the deep end. When the world had discredited us and wrote us off, your love redeemed us and brought life into our dead situations. You sent your son to be our saviour when we thought we were done and of no use. You are God who pays attention to every detail of our lives. You pick us up when we have given up. We continue to pray for your reviving love that holds us up. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen 🙏🙏

*Prepared by **Rev Mary Sachikonye Methodist Minister for (Mile Cross, Costessey, Trinity Thorpe Marriott, Hosford and Drayton) for a time as this. We are a church without walls. We should therefore, continue to proclaim the good news. I will be sending **Words of Hope** every week so that we may continue to nourish our spirits and continue to live in HOPE!***