

# Bringing it Home For Sunday, June 21, 2026

By Allison de Kanel



Our first Bible story today is hard to hear. This happens sometimes.

The Bible is not about a magic world with perfect heroes and no bad guys. I enjoy stories like that, but they aren't in the Bible.

The Bible has stories about the real world with real people in it. Sometimes even the good guys do bad things. That's what real life is like. Even when we try to be good, and obey God, we can make mistakes and hurt other people.

In today's first story, Abraham's wife tells him to get rid of her servant Hagar and Hagar's son Ishmael, because she doesn't want them competing with her son Isaac. Hagar was an enslaved woman, and Ishmael was Abraham's son, Isaac's brother.

Abraham loved Ishmael, and he didn't want to just evict him and his mother. But God told Abraham that he had a plan to make Ishmael great. So Abraham went ahead and sent Hagar and Ishmael away.

We know from other stories in the Bible that Abraham was not afraid to disagree with God, and even to try and change God's mind. But not this time!

Abraham didn't give Hagar and Ishmael enough food and water, or a donkey to carry them. Worst of all, he didn't tell Hagar that God was watching out for her and had great plans for Ishmael. Eventually, when Hagar was ready to give up, God reassured her and helped her and Ishmael.

Sarah and Abraham are important people in our Bible. We can admire the many good things they did in obedience to God, but that doesn't mean we have to admire their mistakes. What do you think Sarah and Abraham could have done differently?

Let's pray. Dear God, help me to do the right thing when I am afraid or jealous or angry or tired. Help me to be kind, even when it is hard. Amen.

Today's Lesson - Genesis 21:8-21

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 for 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.

Artwork: "The Banishment of Hagar," by Johann Friedrich Overbeck (German 1839–41) from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of New York, NY.