Sermon Outline for Mother’s Day
Notes written by Tim Robertson

Genesis 16

In the preceding chapters, Abram received a wonderfully assuring promise from God about his descendants. Yet here we find Abram and Sarai trying to ‘help’ God’s promise to unfold. Hagar, the maidservant, becomes pregnant by Abram and, as a result of her own attitude and Sarai’s insecurity, runs away into the desert.

What can we learn from this story?

**GOD CAN REDEEM US FROM THE PAST**

God seeks her out in verses 7 and 8. The angel of the Lord asks, “Where have you come from and where are you going?” Hagar could only answer honestly: “I’m running away!”

The past continually haunts thousands of women around the world, often trapping them in the present. Victims of rape, HIV, abuse and rejection try to raise children against the backdrop of crippling poverty, fighting to provide for their families through sickness and hopeless situations.

For many of us here today, it may seem like you are always running away from the past; always feeling held back and contained.

Well, the good news is that God knows where you are and, like Hagar, wants to speak hope into your life.
GOD HAS A PURPOSE FOR EVERY MUM AND FOR EVERYONE

In verses 9 and 10, God gives Hagar a direction and a vision of the future.

Compassion’s Child Survival Programme focuses on pregnant mums and those with babies and toddlers. These women are not only getting instruction on nurturing children, healthcare and nutrition advice but are also finding spiritual direction and hope in Jesus. The love, support and care they receive all add to the release that comes from being found by God. Through training, they are also learning skills that will empower them to provide for their families.

For the mums and everyone else here today, God says this:

‘I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future.’ Jeremiah 29:11

GOD IS THE GOD WHO SEES YOU

Verse 13. In the depths of her loneliness and despair, Hagar discovered that someone was watching over her.

God sees you this morning! He knows where you are. He sees the tears that fall and the pain you so often feel. Maybe as a mum, you see things that others miss. Perhaps the tears are over a difficult or disabled child, maybe a distant child or the challenge of raising a child alone. God sees you and His eye is upon you.

Perhaps part of our healing is tied up with ‘seeing’ someone else’s need and making a difference to them.

[Show video – Empowering Mums or Being Elisabeth.]
Genesis 21: 1-21

Five chapters on and we see that Abram and Sarai have now become Abraham and Sarah. Hagar has given birth to a son called Ishmael and Sarah has a child called Isaac. Once again, jealousy and insecurity rise up in Hagar and she and Ishmael are sent packing - but not before God reveals his purpose for Hagar to Abraham who provides her with food and water.

**EVEN THOUGH THE SITUATION MAY GET WORSE, GOD STILL KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!**

Hagar, called ‘that slave woman’ by Sarah, recoiled back into a place of containment; separating herself from God’s promise she began to cry. We need to hold on to what God has promised. Don’t give up – keep trusting even when it seems like nothing is happening. God wants to cultivate a dependency and faith in Him despite our circumstances.

**GOD HEARS YOUR CRY**

God not only sees but He hears and whispers to us, ‘Don’t be afraid.’ In verse 18, he says to Hagar, “Lift the boy up, take him by the hand for I will make him into a great nation.”

His intent is to lift us, take us and make us into what He wants us to be.

Proverbs 21:13 says, “If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.”

We have a responsibility to hear the cry of the poor and come alongside the hopeless and the helpless, whether in our local area or in another part of the world.
We can respond to the cry of mothers in the developing world by lifting them up, taking them and their children by the hand and giving them a great opportunity. Just as God provided a well of water for them to drink in verse 19, why not partner with Compassion to open up wells of provision, education, healthcare, social development, supplementary food and clothing and the opportunity to ‘see’ the One who sees them.

Former Compassion assisted children will often testify to the fact that ‘God was with them as they grew up’ (verse 20).

Thank God that mothers around the world today can be proud of the fact that their children are able be who God intended them to be.

[Show video – Margaret Makoha or Start Small Think Big.]