

## 4 Stupid Things Believers Do 730

Thanks to Dave Redick for the ideas of this sermon.

**TEXT:** Genesis 16:1-6 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. 3 Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. 4 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The Lord judge between you and me." 6 So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.

### INTRODUCTION:

1. If there is an explicit biblical explanation for this animosity, it goes all the way back to Abraham. The Jews are descendants of Abraham's son Isaac. The Arabs are descendants of Abraham's son Ishmael. With Ishmael being the son of a slave woman (Genesis 16:1-16) and Isaac being the promised son who would inherit the promises to Abraham (Genesis 21:1-3), animosity between the two sons was almost inevitable. As a result of Ishmael mocking Isaac (Genesis 21:9), Sarah talked Abraham into sending Hagar and Ishmael away (Genesis 21:11-21). Likely this caused even more contempt in Ishmael's heart toward Isaac. An angel even prophesied to Hagar that Ishmael would "live in hostility toward all his brothers" (Genesis 16:11-12). The religion of Islam, of which a majority of Arabs are adherents, has made this hostility more profound. The Qur'an contains conflicting instructions for Muslims regarding Jews. At one point it instructs Muslims to treat Jews as brothers, but at

another point it commands Muslims to attack Jews who refuse to convert to Islam. The Qur'an also introduces a conflict as to which son of Abraham was truly the son of promise. The Hebrew Scriptures say it was Isaac. The Qur'an says it was Ishmael. The Qur'an teaches that it was Ishmael that Abraham almost sacrificed to the Lord, not Isaac (in contradiction to Genesis chapter 22). This debate over who was the son of promise contributes to the hostility today.

2. So the stupid things we do can affect our children, grandchildren, even in some cases thousands of years.

3. When we ignore the counsel of God we will do stupid things.

- A. Even heroes of the faith do stupid things.
- B. Our text talks about Abraham and Sarah.
- C. They did 4 stupid things,

#### **I. Let fleshly desire overrule good sense (1b – 2b)**

1. Our personal desires get in the way of common sense.
2. I want it – no matter what – Sarah wanted a child!
3. In our disappointment or frustration we say, God will understand. (Many today have the same problem and do ungodly things just as they did.)
4. Or we say, I don't care what God thinks, this is what I want.
5. Abraham and Sarah are making plans according to the flesh, not God.

#### **II. Listen to those who are unfamiliar with the Word of God (2c-4a)**

1. We often go to the wrong sources for our information and decision making
2. Do you go to: Banker for legal advice, Math teacher for medical problem, Preacher for auto repair, etc.
3. Many seek moral or spiritual advice from the WRONG sources
4. Why ask non-Christians how to live your life?
5. Why allow non-Christians to tell you what a Christian should be or do?
6. Reading Books by those not faithful to the New Testament.

### **III. Blame others for problems they bring on themselves (4b)**

1. Everything that happens to me is some else's fault
2. Sarah "despised" Hagar
3. Maid is now 2<sup>nd</sup> wife – younger, can have children – Fear of losing Abraham now creeps into the picture.
4. Matthew 7:5 – take beam from own eye, first
5. Genesis 3:12 – Adam – That woman you gave me – her fault – God's fault

### **IV. Shirk responsibility for sake of keeping peace (6)**

1. Abraham is the head – patriarch – leader – Take the lead
2. He should have set things back as they should be.
3. He shirked that duty – Sarah do what you want
4. Misplace the remote or lose my tools – scream and get things straight
5. BUT on important matters – let it go, just to keep the peace

### **Conclusion:**

1. See illustration below. We need to be in tune with God's call.
2. We must learn that Abraham and Sarah were not perfect.
3. We must learn from their mistakes.

## **Closing illustration**

In an earlier day a certain young man was seeking a job as a Morse code telegraph operator. He found an advertisement in the want ads and went to the address that was listed. When he arrived it was a large, busy, noisy office. In the background he could hear the chatter of a telegraph key. A sign instructed applicants to take a seat and wait until they were summoned to enter the inner office. Eight candidates had gotten there ahead of him; they were seated along the wall. This was discouraging, but still he sat down to wait.

After about two or three minutes the young man stood up, stepped over to the door of the inner office, and walked in. Naturally all of the other applicants started looking at each other and muttering. Within about three minutes the young man came back out the door with the employer who said, "You gentlemen may go now. The position has been filled." Several of them began to grumble. One spoke up and said, "I don't understand. He was the last to come in. We never even got a chance to be interviewed, and he got the job. That's not fair."

The employer said, "All the time you've been sitting here the telegraph key has been ticking out a message. It said, 'If you understand this message, come right in. The job is yours.' None of you heard it. He did. He got the job. "