



GENESIS 21:1-7

GETTING STARTED...

When you think 'miraculous birth', what comes to mind? The birth of Jesus is not the first miraculous birth in the Bible. Throughout the history of God's work in the world we come across many examples of God using birth narratives to show his provision of life out of what looks like death. As we begin this Christmas season, we start with the first woman in the Bible who struggles with infertility and God's provision through it. Abraham and Sarah must wait for a long time to see God's provision, but God is faithful to every promise he has given. As we see their example of trust in God's faithfulness we also see God's provision of joy. Abraham and Sarah both laughed at God's promises, but God turns that derision into pure joy at the birth of Isaac. In the same way, the birth of Jesus shows us not only God's faithfulness to his promises, but how he will one day turn all our sorrow into joy!

READ THE TEXT: GENESIS 21:1-7

The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as he had promised. ² And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³ Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. ⁴ And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me." ⁷ And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

UNDERSTANDING THE WORD

1. Look back at Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15:1-6, and Genesis 17:15-21, how does God fulfill these promises in this text? How are they ultimately fulfilled in Jesus?
2. Why did Abraham and Sarah laugh at God earlier? Why are they laughing in this passage?

REFLECTING ON THE SERMON

3. What was the main point of the sermon?
4. What has God been impressing on your heart from the sermon?

APPLYING THE POINT

5. How do we put this into practice?

Agassiz What do you believe is too hard for the Lord to accomplish? How is the promise made to Abraham & Sarah relevant to you? What great things has the Mighty One done for you, and how can you live with joy this Christmas?

Chilliwack What foreshadowing from Isaac to Jesus stands out to you most? What similarities between Isaac's birth and the spiritual birth of salvation stand out to you?

Harrison/Lake Errock How have you witnessed the fulfillment of God's promises in your life? What has this taught you about the faithfulness of God?

Promontory What are examples that you have seen in your own life of God's faithfulness? How does this help us trust God's promises in the Bible more? How can we show our joy in the Lord even when we do not have everything we might want?

PRAYING & SHARING

1. How can you share what you have learned with... another believer?
An unbeliever?
2. Share and pray for one another in your life group. How can you specifically pray for and encourage one another in response to this text?



How to Use this Guide

This guide is intended to help facilitate Central Life Groups as they meet to understand the Bible passage, discuss the sermon, and how to put it into practice in our lives. What is contained in this guide is not an exhaustive text analysis nor a full list of questions that can or should be asked during Life Group. This is simply a guide to help **start conversations that are centered on the Word of God.**

The Life Group Guide is separated into three main sections that are arranged with an intentional order: *Understanding the Word*, *Reflecting on the Sermon*, and *Applying the Point*. We want to first understand the Word of God, and then check that understanding by what has been preached, and then discuss how to put it into practice in our own lives. The order is intended to imitate the process of how the Word of God makes changes in our lives. Head, heart, hands, and all of it wrapped in prayer.

While the meaning of a text doesn't change, the way that we are called to apply it may look different from campus to campus, and even person to person. To reflect this distinction, you will see application questions from each campus in this guide.

Start with the question(s) from your campus and then look at others to see if they are helpful for your group. You may be surprised how similar or different they end up being and how the diversity brings a fuller understanding to how we can apply the Word of God.

Our goal is not that you answer every question in this guide, but that you are able to discuss the Word of God in a way **that helps everyone follow Jesus together!**

*"Great are the works of the LORD,
studied by all who delight in them." - Psalm 111:2*