



**GENESIS**  
*Grace from the Beginning*

**21/22 April 2018**  
Vol. 40, No. 15

## Eternal Insights from an Ongoing Conflict

*Genesis 21:8-21*

### English Services

(8 & 10:30 a.m., & 5:30 p.m.)

Prelude  
Call to Worship  
Worship through Praise  
Worship through Fellowship  
Worship through Giving  
Worship in Music (8 & 10:30 a.m.)  
Scripture Reading  
Worship in the Word  
*Pastor Larry Pabiona*  
Benediction  
Benediction in Song (8 & 10:30 a.m.)

### Filipino Service

(3 n.h.)

Paghahanda  
Tawag sa Pagsamba  
Pagsamba sa Pag-aawitan  
Pagkilala sa mga Bisita  
Pagsamba sa Pagbibigay  
Pagbasa ng Salita ng Diyos  
Pakikinig sa Salita ng Diyos  
*Elder Marlon Roldan*  
Pangwakas na Panalangin  
at Basbas

See inset inside for the **Traditional Service (Sat., 6 p.m.)** program.



# Eternal Insights from an Ongoing Conflict

Today's Message (21/22 April 2018) /  
*Genesis 21:8-21*

GOD SOMETIMES  
USES HUMAN  
SINFULNESS  
TO FURTHER  
UNFOLD HIS  
PLAN IN THE  
WORLD—A  
TRUTH THAT  
SATURATES  
THE PAGES OF  
GENESIS.

Ishmael was probably a very important figure in Abraham's camp, the pride and delight of his father, spoiled by everyone. Remember that in Genesis 17:20 God had promised fruitfulness to Ishmael as well as Isaac. At no time during the fourteen years of silence between Ishmael's birth and the birth of Isaac did God put divine censorship on Abraham's paternal relationship with Ishmael. Abraham was probably content in these years, happy to dote on his son Ishmael.

When Abraham had to send Ishmael away, this was the most difficult thing God had told Abraham to do in his 100 years. This would be the last time Abraham would see the son he had loved for 16 years. Something like this hurts deeply, and you don't get over it in a few days or even in a few years. The deep rupture in the family was never repaired. Sarah and Hagar never became friends.

What are some eternal insights to gain from a war that goes on until today?

## 1. GOD SOMETIMES USES HUMAN SINFULNESS TO FURTHER UNFOLD HIS PLAN IN THE WORLD (VV. 8-13).

- The legal codes of Abraham's day forbade throwing out a maidservant's son if a rightful, natural heir was born. Sarah's request thus offended social law, Abraham's sensibilities, and his love for Ishmael (v. 11).
- Abraham was very fond of Ishmael (*Genesis 17:18*), and he exploded with anger (NIV's "very distressed" is an understatement) at the suggestion that he should drive them out (vv. 11–13).
- The reality is that Sarah's demand, harsh as it may seem to us, was consistent with God's plan. This does not legitimize any pettiness on her part, but rather affirms the truth that God sometimes uses human sinfulness to further unfold his plan in the world—a truth that saturates the pages of Genesis.
- In Paul's commentary on this passage in Galatians 4:21–31, he deals at length with this expulsion to

### Traditional Service (Saturday, 6 p.m.)

Prelude  
Call to Worship  
Worship through Praise  
Worship through Giving  
Worship in Music  
Doxology  
Worship through Fellowship  
Scripture Reading  
Preparatory Hymn  
Worship in the Word  
*Pastor Larry Pabiona*  
Response Hymn  
Benediction

*There will be no Traditional Service on May 12, 2018. Please be guided accordingly.*



# Eternal Insights from an Ongoing Conflict

Today's Message (21/22 April 2018) /  
*Genesis 21:8-21*

show that Law and Gospel cannot coexist. He compares Christians to Isaac, children of promise free from the Law. Like Isaac was persecuted by the offspring of flesh, so in Paul's day the Galatians were beset by the Judaizers.

## 2. GOD IS WILLING TO ANSWER THE PRAYERS OF THOSE WHOSE FOLLY LANDS THEM IN DIRE STRAITS, IF THEY TURN TO HIM IN PENITENCE (VV. 14-19).

- Ishmael started to pray, perhaps regretting his behavior that had led to their expulsion. His prayer was heard, and an angel of God (*Genesis 16:7-11*) called to Hagar, repeating the promises (v. 18) and leading them to water. Once again the aptness of Ishmael's name ("God hears") is demonstrated. God heard him whose name had been given years before when God had heard Hagar's cries (*Genesis 16:11*).
- The best way to solve any problem is God's way. Hagar had forgotten God's promise in *Genesis 16:10*; otherwise she would not have lost heart. God did sustain them and kept His Word. If we obey Him, He will always open the way and solve the problem.

## 3. GOD ALSO CARES FOR BANISHED AND REJECTED PEOPLE LIKE HAGAR AND ISHMAEL, NOT JUST PROMINENT PEOPLE LIKE ABRAHAM AND SARAH (VV. 20-21).

- Ponder the startling statement, "God was with the boy" (v. 20). It is clear that Ishmael was not a part of *the* Promise, the one that would culminate with Christ; such an honor was reserved for Isaac. But that doesn't mean Ishmael was cast from the divine presence and made to live outside of God's favor. Rather, the LORD established Ishmael as the patriarch of his own nation possibly to make up for the inheritance Ishmael lost.
- Though separated from the family of Abraham, neither Hagar nor Ishmael is beyond the mercy of God. As she discovered in *Genesis 16*, the LORD is "the One who hears" and again, God answers prayer, giving her reassurance about their future: "I shall make him into a great nation." So though Ishmael and his mother were excluded from the blessings associated with Abraham's immediate family, they still experienced God's care and protection: *God heard the boy crying* (v. 17); *God opened her eyes* (v. 19); and *God was with the boy as he grew up* (v. 20).

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Every time we read about the Israeli-Arab conflict, we should think about Ishmael, the first Arab. And when we think of Ishmael we should think of this passage where God promised a great future for the Arabs to Abraham and then repeated it to Hagar. God was at work on center stage with Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. But he was also at work behind the scenes—back in the desert, beneath a bush – for Hagar and Ishmael.

We do not have a God who favors only superstars and the popular. He also shows his protection and care for people victimized by the sins of others – like Hagar and Ishmael ■

Jeng, Macel, Amy, Anne, Luis, Princess, Citen, Jireh, Jun, Mitch, Roselle, Toots, Aya, Josh, Yan, Susan, Blony, Jill, Leeza, Lai, Mildz, Kino, Jasmin, Sheryl, Mac, Smile, Cris, Joel, Dolly, Yeng, Aiza, Laura, J, Freyja, Cynthia, Belle, Joyce, Mishel, Liz, Joan, Myg, Neth, Irwin, Nao, Lyn, Pat, Kennis, Ruth, Helen, Gela, Mica, Milky, Rochelle, Gigi, Bubbles, Joy—these are not just names. These are the GCF International Christian School faculty and staff. Each name represents a life changed by Christ and one used by God to change others for Him by teaching each of our 440 plus students everyday in our school.

Each of them know every student (and their parents), not only by name, but as people. As Chaplain, I have been encouraged seeing up close how the GCF-ICS teachers care for the students, taking time to mentor as many of them as they can. They have inspired me to do the same. If each of them can have a real kuya/ate relationship with that many people, why can't I have that type of relationship with those around me, in the *oikos* God provided for me?

This coming May, GCF-ICS will have their first batch of Senior High graduates. Before any graduation, the students go on a retreat where they are given time to reconnect with God and each other. Last March, the Grade 10 retreat was mostly made up of time allotted for students to meet up with each other in pairs to have time to build their friendships, share their burdens, and, most importantly, to pray for one another. To my shock, I did not see any student using their phones or isolating themselves – every student truly treasured those one-on-one talking and prayer times with each other. Picture it: teenagers...talking, listening, and praying with each other, without even glancing at

their phones! If these students can focus on building friendships with each other, why can't I do this with my *oikos*?

In a big church, we can easily feel we are just a name or a number. Yet this was never the intention that Jesus wanted for His Church. We are meant to have relationship with each other, not just be seat mates. Through my time with the GCF-ICS family, I have found the importance of making time for real relationships with those in your *oikos*. And one of things we can do to build real relationships is to pray together. We have this opportunity on Saturday, April 28 at 5:00 p.m. at the monthly Concert of Prayer, which will be led by the GCF-ICS ministry.



Let us take time to get to know each other today and remember we are not just names or numbers—we are family. This Sunday morning, we will be blessed by the voices and talents of the FEBIAS Chorale and Music Team, who will lead us in worship. They are led by GCF's very own Joshua Capule, our very own Music Director, who is the OIC of FEBIAS College of Bible Church Music Department. I pray that we all take time to get to know them after the service and give them a warm GCF welcome ■



# Ablaze Devotional

The beginning of the gospel of Mark paints a picture of a voice speaking in the wilderness. He paraphrases Isaiah's words by including words from Malachi: God appears in His temple. What was about to happen echoes a familiar theme about what Israel anticipates—the Day of the Lord.

The Day of the Lord has been marred with images of destruction, of death, and bloodshed. It portrays Armageddon, the war that will end all wars. But to clearly understand this Day, we need to look back to the beginning of all beginnings.

God created an amazing universe, and established time and space. He called it very good. He created and placed humanity in His garden, a kind of a temple in which work and worship happen simultaneously. They are given authority to rule creation on His behalf, sustaining and nurturing what He called good.

But humanity was tempted by a strange, evil, and un-human being. It offered a promise that humanity could rule creation in the place of God, defining their own good and evil. This led to a vicious cycle of a struggle against death, straying further and further from the presence of God. However, in God's holiness and perfect love, He will never leave nor forsake His beloved creation. God became flesh, restoring life and declaring God's rule on earth. He came to redeem humanity and all creation by taking on the full extent of evil in His suffering and death.

This is how the Day of the Lord comes. He saves humanity by His word, even with His life. He renews creation by restoring work and worship in His temple, calling people out of the ashes of destruction and death into His garden. His death and resurrection welcomes all creation to His Day, to a new way of life ■

**"I, the Lord All-Powerful,  
will send my messenger to  
prepare the way for me.  
Then suddenly the Lord you  
are looking for will appear  
in his temple."  
- Mark 3:1 (CEV)**

## GCF PRAYER GATHERINGS AT THE CHAPEL:

**The GCF Hour of Prayer**  
*Tuesdays, 6-7 a.m.*

**Midweek Prayer Service**  
*Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.*

## Ministry Opportunities + Other Announcements



### GG LEADERS' ASSEMBLY

*New structure and GG leader's role will be discussed*

April 28 (Sat.), 3-5 p.m., at the Fellowship Hall  
Contact 0917 532 7740 for more info



**TALK<sub>2</sub>**

### TO-DO: MANAGING LIFE PRIORITIES

*YA Talk 2, presented by the Young Adults Ministry and featuring Kuya Aleks Tan*

May 5 (Sat.), at the 4/F Assembly Area  
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; **Everyone** is welcome  
Contact 0917 532 7741 to register/for more info

### SHIPWRECKED: RESCUED BY JESUS

*GCF Daily Vacation Bible School (DVBS) 2018*

May 28 to June 2 (Mon.-Sat.), 8 a.m. to 12 noon  
here at GCF | **For kids ages 3-12**

Registration is online: <https://vbspro.events/p/events/dvbsshipwrecked2018>

### CAMP LIVE: VERIFIED

*Youth camps for high school and college students at the Batangas Country Club*

HS: May 31-June 3 | College: July 19-22  
For more details, please visit the Youth L.I.V.E.  
Camp booth at the lobby.



### STEWARDSHIP REPORT:

*April 2018*

	April Budget	Received, Apr. 1-17
General	7,659,315	4,602,986
Missions	927,000	863,145
	Jan. - Apr. Budget	Received, Jan. - Apr.
General	36,611,426	25,848,990
Missions	3,708,000	3,482,052

### Flower Ministry

*The flowers this week are given with praise and thanksgiving to our God for His grace and mercy by anonymous donors, the Valera family and the Messiah College.*

Please call 632 1354 to 56 for inquiries on how to participate in this ministry.



**This May 2018,  
know what it means  
to love God  
with your  
total self.**

**Who are Rev. Edmund  
and Ann Chan?**

The husband and wife team of Edmund and Ann founded and currently lead the Global Alliance of Intentional Disciple-Making Churches (IDMC), which is based in Singapore. This alliance champions best practices in intentional disciple-making.

**Unlock  
the door to  
abundant living  
promised by  
Christ.**

This coming May 11 and 12, join us in learning the wonderful journey towards the foundation of discipleship—love for God.

As part of our year-long 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, we invited Rev. Edmund and Ann Chan to be speakers in **Loving God: A Discipleship Conference.**

We believe that foundational to our discipleship journey, and to the full life Jesus promised, is our own love for God, and Edmund and Ann will talk about loving God with all our hearts, minds, souls and strength. They have commendably served their

local church in Singapore, and has blessed the global church, including GCF in the past years, with their experience and wisdom, and will do so again in this upcoming conference.

**Conference Dates:**

May 11, Friday (6:00 to 9:00 p.m.) to  
May 12, Saturday (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

**Ticket Prices:**

800.00 pesos (live, in-person)  
400.00 pesos (live, video feed only)  
*Lunch is **not** included.*

Only limited seats are available, and we encourage GCFers to avail of the Auditorium B seats (live, in-person). Please get your tickets as soon as possible—first come, first served! Don't miss this rare opportunity!



*A Discipleship Conference*

# How may we SERVE YOU BETTER?

Fill-out this tear off form and drop it in an offering bag/box or at the Ministry Information Booth. Please check all that is applicable:

- ☐ I am a first-time guest.
- ☐ I prayed to receive Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord today.
- ☐ I would like to know how to become a Christian.
- ☐ I am interested in becoming a member of this church.
- ☐ **I want to join a Growth Group.**  
(Specify age group: \_\_\_\_\_)  
(Specify group composition: \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ I want to start a Growth Group.
- ☐ I want to host a Growth Group.

Please share with us some information about yourself:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_ Landline no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Growth Group (if you already have one): \_\_\_\_\_

*Today is **21/22 April 2018**, and I attended the 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 3:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. (Sat) (encircle the time).*

Write below *any* inquiry or prayer item that you want to ask or share.

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For hospital or house visitation, dedication service, or funeral service requests, please call or text 0917 532 7794.

# God's Way to Heaven

## THE GOSPEL

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."  
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

## THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

**God is holy and righteous:** "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). **He requires holiness of us as well:** "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

## THE TRUTH ABOUT MAN

**Man is sinful:** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).  
**Sin demands a penalty:** "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

## THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST

**Christ is the expression of God's love for us:** "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). **Christ paid the penalty of our sins and died for sinners:** "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18). **Through Christ, God offers man reconciliation:** "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (2 Corinthians 5:18).

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

**Believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior:** "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

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**PRAYER:** Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. I believe that you died on the cross in my place, to save me from my sins, and I accept you as my Savior, and the Master of my life forever. Amen.

## Need someone to talk to?

Visit the Emmaus Road Counseling Center at the GCF Mezzanine floor or contact 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80 or 0917 532 7794 for inquiries.