

**Readings for the week of June 25/23:**

Genesis 21:8-21

Psalms 86:1-10, 16-17

Romans 6:1b-11

Matthew 10:24-39

When we do something wrong/sinful, we may feel as though there is no hope for us, and that God will surely give up on us. In the Genesis reading, we read about Abraham, Sarah (his wife), Isaac (his son with Sarah), Hagar (An Egyptian Slave woman who bore Abraham's other son, Ishmael.)

Sarah is distraught over the prospect of Isaac and Ishmael growing up together and sharing in any inheritance from their father, Abraham. God tells Abraham to honor her in Genesis 21:12, in the words, "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." God continues in verse 13, of Genesis 21, by saying, "As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring."

Even though Abraham sinned by having his son, Ishmael, with a woman who was not his wife, God kept His promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. (Genesis 17:4)

Genesis 21:20, tells us, "God was with the boy [Ishmael], and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow.

God is more faithful to us, than we are to Him sometimes.

May we never forget that Romans 3:23-25 says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith."

God isn't surprised when we sin, but He has made reconciliation between Him and us, possible through Jesus Christ, when we come to Him in repentance.