

**“WATER FOR ALL”**

**Pastor Mike Corwin**

**3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT**

**TEXT: 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7**

**GOD’S WORD: GENESIS 21:8-21**

**I – SURROGATE MOTHER:**

When it first started happening most people looked down on it but it’s so common today that I don’t think most people even give it a second thought. I’m talking about having a surrogate mother for your child. For one reason or another some women are just unable to conceive and carry a baby so they hire someone else to do it for them. This other person has all their medical bills paid and usually gets some kind of a monetary reward for letting her stomach act as an incubator for someone else for nine months. The actress Sarah Jessica Parker employed this method so she and her husband could have a child. Kim Kardashian has done it twice. I’ve read of mothers who have carried their own grandchildren because their daughters were unable to conceive. I think this is a good and noble sacrifice on behalf of another human being.

But not all cases turn out so well. I was reading of a case where a woman and her husband had wanted to have a child all of their lives. They were well off and wanted for nothing except one thing...a baby. For whatever reason the woman was unable to conceive. They tried everything, including prayer, but she did not conceive. They had no child to love and no heirs to leave all their wealth too. So the woman got inventive, she came up with a surrogate. She didn’t use a doctor or invitro fertilization, she just had her husband sleep with the maid who evidently was fertile and

blessed them with a son. All was right with the world until the unforeseen happened. Seems the woman wasn't as barren as she thought she was and before she knew what was happening she too conceived a child, had a normal pregnancy, and gave birth to a healthy baby boy also. And that's when the case turned ugly.

The woman became jealous. The maid's boy was older wasn't he? Wouldn't he have a legal claim to the couple's enormous assets? Wouldn't he inherit their wealth? Besides that why did her husband spend time with the maid's son anyhow? She had finally given him one of their own, the maid's son wasn't needed any longer. She didn't want her son to share his father with this other son, he was a half breed anyhow wasn't he? She wasn't the mother, the other woman was.

She had to do something and do it fast. She went to her husband and told him the other boy was making fun of their son and she demanded that he cast the maid and her illegitimate son out of the house. She made sure the maid and son were sent out into the desert with just enough food and water to get them far enough away they wouldn't be able to see the bodies when they died. She wanted them dead and her husband was upset but did it anyhow. And off they went. The maid walked with her son as far as she could until the supplies ran out and then laid him under a bush in the shade and then walked away so she wouldn't have to watch him die. So much for being a surrogate mother.

## **II – HAGAR & ISHMAEL:**

The case I'm talking about is an old case, you can find it in the Old Testament, and you heard it read to you this morning. It's the story of Hagar and Ishmael. God had promised the elderly couple Abraham and Sarah that they would be the father and mother of his chosen people and their descendents would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the beach. Sarah's faith was lacking and she got tired of waiting and had her Egyptian

slave Hagar sleep with Abraham and she gave birth to Ishmael. When Sarah had Abraham's son Isaac, she told him to drive Hagar and Ishmael away. The scripture says that Abraham didn't really want to do this but God told him it would be alright. So he did as he was told.

### **III – WATER FOR ALL:**

It's in this story though that I see a glimpse of how enormous the love of God really is. It's in this story that I come to realize that God does not want anyone to perish. That there is enough water to go around.

Hagar leaves the life she's known with only the water and food she can carry on her back and wanders in the wilderness until she runs out of the supplies. She knows that her and her son's death is imminent and has made up her mind both will perish. She places Ishmael in the shade and walks away so she doesn't have to watch his suffering as they expire and does what most mothers would do, she starts to cry. Not only is she crying but Ishmael, who is hot, hungry, and thirsty is crying too and the Bible says that "God heard the boy crying." He tells Hagar to settle down, pull herself together and leads her to a well so that they can drink and live. Not only that but tells her that he will use her son to make a great nation too. Ishmael is the father of the Arab people, the Bedouins.

Here's where I have my theology stretched as to the vastness of God's love. These Arab people are the ones who we would call Muslims today or Islamic people. They are the enemies of the Jews, God chosen people, and of the Christians, those saved by Jesus. We read daily of how they are blowing people up in their holy war against us. And God could have prevented it all by letting the two of them die in that desert thousands of years ago! He could have plugged his ears and ignored them. He could have had the angels sing louder and drown out their cries. He could have

prevented wars and death by letting them die...but he didn't. He didn't because he loved them. It wasn't their fault that Abraham and Sarah didn't trust his word. It wasn't their fault she had to sleep with him and Ishmael hadn't asked to be born. But just like every other baby he was a gift from God. Hagar and he were his children just as much as Abraham and Sarah were and he loved them just as much as any of his other children. And because he loved them he wanted them to have long and abundant life. He wanted their thirst to be satisfied.

#### **IV – TEXT – 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-17:**

This is the message and theology that Paul passed on to the young preacher Timothy. Listen to his words in this morning's text.

#### **1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup>I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. <sup>2</sup>Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup>This is good and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. <sup>5</sup>For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. <sup>6</sup>He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time. <sup>7</sup>And I have been chosen as a preacher and apostle to teach the Gentiles this message about faith and truth. I'm not exaggerating—just telling the truth.

Paul points out that prayer is essential. Prayer is how we take our cares and concerns to God, not only our own, but those of others as well. And we aren't supposed to pray only for our loved ones, but for others too, even our political leaders. And if you understand

what Paul is saying here, you can understand the magnitude of God's love.

When Paul said that Timothy and all the other Christians were supposed to pray for their kings and leaders he was talking about the one in power at the time. His name was Nero. He was the most brutal Roman Emperor who had reigned over them. He was the one who had Christians rounded up and fed to the wild beasts in the coliseum. He's the one who had Christians tied to stakes and then set on fire in his gardens to light up the night for his parties. He's the one who would have Paul and Peter killed, and he was considered to be the anti-Christ at the time. And yet Paul says that the people were supposed to pray for him and all the others like him.

He gave us instructions to pray for even evil people like him because God wants everyone to be saved and to know the truth...that Jesus came for everyone. That Jesus gave his life not just for those who deserved it, but for those who don't. Jesus gave his life so that everyone could find God's love in a loveless world.

Jesus came to earth and went through what he did for everyone. He was arrested, tortured, humiliated, beaten, spit on, and crucified not just for the good people, but for the bad ones too...not for popes and preachers, but also for perverts and prostitutes. Not only for Christians but for Jews and Muslims as well as those who believe nothing. Jesus died for murderers, thieves, drunks, liars, adulterers, abusers, homosexuals, cheaters, and any other class of people you can think of. Jesus died for them all...even you!

Jesus came to be the living water that would give life to all those wandering in the wilderness. Your job as Paul says is to preach and teach this message about faith and truth.

**V – POEM:**

Someone sent me a poem aa while ago that I thought was a perfect ending to this morning's message, so let me share it with you.

### Poem

**I was shocked, confused, bewildered  
As I entered Heaven's door,  
Not by the beauty of it all,  
Nor the lights or its decor.**

**But it was the folks in Heaven  
Who made me sputter and gasp--  
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,  
The alcoholics and the trash.**

**There stood the kid from seventh grade  
Who swiped my lunch money twice.  
Next to him was my old neighbor  
Who never said anything nice.**

**Herb, who I always thought  
Was rotting away in hell,  
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,  
Looking incredibly well.**

**I nudged Jesus, 'What's the deal?  
I would love to hear Your take.  
How'd all these sinners get up here?  
God must've made a mistake.**

**'And why is everyone so quiet,  
So somber - give me a clue.'  
'Hush, child,' He said, 'they're all in shock.  
No one thought they'd be seeing you.'**

As you come to communion this morning, remember that just like everyone else, you are really undeserving of the Grace God has given

you. Aren't you glad the water of Salvation is for everyone. **Every saint has a past...but every sinner has a future.** Come to the well and drink deeply of God's love and mercy and then share the water with others.

**AMEN**