



Title: Fake or For Reals?

Date: 4.18.10

Series: Forefathers

Text: Gen 21:8-20; Gal 4:21-5:15

Synopsis: Have you ever been in a place where you felt like you didn't belong? That you didn't deserve to be there? Maybe it's a restaurant where you can't pronounce anything on the menu and there are no prices listed. Maybe it's a formal occasion and you're the only one wearing shorts. Maybe it's a job where everyone has their MBA and you dropped out of community college. You feel like an imposter, a fake, a fraud.

I imagine this is something like Hagar and Ishmael felt after the birth of Isaac. They must have felt like they just didn't belong there anymore. After all, Isaac was the biological son of Abraham and Sarah. He was the miracle baby, the promised one.

You remember the story. Abraham and Sarah had been promised that they were going to have a son. After ten years of waiting, Sarah told Abraham to have sex with her handmaiden, Hagar (as was the custom of the day) to produce an heir. Ishmael is born as a result but God informs Abraham that he is not the son that was promised. Another fifteen years pass and finally Isaac, the promised son, is born.

But what of Hagar and Ishmael? They had been reduced to the status of slaves and were eventually kicked out. Ishmael was not the son of promise. He was not Abraham's heir. He was an imposter and he had to go.

Spiritually speaking, we are all Ishmael. We don't belong. We are looking at the wine list when all we want is a beer. We are wondering if anyone else is going to show up wearing shorts and sneakers, and nobody else does. We are not sure what restricted net assets are or how they affect the profit and loss statement. In short, we don't belong.

So what do we do? We can continue to pose. We can pretend we are something that we are not. We can try to perform our way into heaven by doing all the "spiritual" things we think we are supposed to do when inside we know we are a train wreck. Or, we can recognize that Jesus came, died and rose again to make us heirs, not

slaves. He came to make us sons and daughters of promise. Just like Isaac. Just like Jesus.