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Dear Father,

In the silence of the night,

The autumn breeze carries dew, and frost gently kisses the scented path.

Resting against the window, I contemplate the flowers,

Fireflies dance, their glow flickering gracefully.

Yet, it seems that God remains unmoved by my suffering,

The delicate willow withers prematurely, causing my heart to ache.

Haze lingers in the air, worldly affairs grow complicated,

Endlessly,

The wind arrives late, revealing a cruel and merciless world.

Eastern wind, do not blow with malice,

The cry of a crow awakens slumbering souls,

In my dreams, I vividly perceive the realm of illusion,

My hair already adorned with gray strands.

Grant me the joy of walking with the Lord,

I softly whisper, imploring His attentive ear,
Autumn rain approaches its end, anticipating the arrival of dawn.
May I discover the realm of the divine,
The Lord's path guiding this era,
Clear as the tranquil waters of autumn,
Beautiful as the blooming peaches and plums,
Evergreen pines and cypresses, water nourishing green onions,
My heart is deeply moved,
My spirit is bright and clear like the radiant glow of the full moon,
March's early spring witnesses begonias blossoming,
Picking chrysanthemums by the eastern fence, the sun sets askew.
Lord, with your boundless love and compassion,
Grant me moments of joy in leisure,
I express my gratitude to the Lord. Amen.

Genesis Chapter 21

Genesis chapter 21 tells the story of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah. It begins with Sarah miraculously conceiving and giving birth to a son named Isaac, as God had promised. This brings great joy to Abraham and Sarah, and they celebrate Isaac's birth.

However, conflict arises when Sarah sees Ishmael, Abraham's son from Hagar the maidservant, mocking Isaac. Sarah demands that Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael away, which greatly distresses Abraham. But God assures Abraham that He will take care of Ishmael and promises to make him into a great nation as well.

Abraham obeys God's command, and the next morning he sends Hagar and Ishmael away with some provisions. They wander in the wilderness and eventually run out of water. In their desperation, Hagar leaves Ishmael under a bush and cries out to God for help. God hears her and provides water for them to survive.

Meanwhile, Isaac grows and is weaned, and Abraham holds a great feast to celebrate. But Sarah notices Ishmael, now a teenager, mocking again. Sarah insists

that Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael away, this time without hesitation. Abraham is saddened by this, but God assures him once again that He will make a great nation from Ishmael.

Abraham provides Hagar and Ishmael with bread and water, and they wander in the wilderness of Beersheba. God hears Ishmael's cry and opens Hagar's eyes to see a well. They settle in the wilderness of Paran, and Ishmael becomes skilled with the bow.

Important verses in Genesis chapter 21 include:

Genesis 21:1: "The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as he had promised." This verse highlights the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises.

Genesis 21:6: "And Sarah said, 'God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.'" Sarah expresses her joy and gratitude for the birth of Isaac, which was a source of laughter and happiness.

Genesis 21:12: "But God said to Abraham, 'Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named.'" God reaffirms His plan to establish His covenant through Isaac and instructs Abraham to heed Sarah's words.

Genesis 21:17: "And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.'" This verse shows God's compassion and care for Hagar and Ishmael in their distress.

Genesis 21:20: "And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow." This verse highlights God's faithfulness to His promise of making Ishmael into a great nation and His provision for him in the wilderness.

Reflection on Genesis 21:

Genesis 21 presents us with several important reflections:

God's faithfulness to His promises: Throughout the chapter, we witness the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises to Abraham and Sarah. Despite their old age and seemingly impossible circumstances, God miraculously enables Sarah

to conceive and give birth to Isaac. This reminds us that God is faithful to His word, even when situations seem impossible or unlikely.

God's sovereignty in difficult choices: The story of Hagar and Ishmael being sent away raises questions about God's sovereignty in difficult choices. Although it was a painful decision for Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away, God reassured him that He would take care of them and make Ishmael into a great nation. This teaches us that sometimes God's plans may require us to make difficult choices, but we can trust that He is in control and has a greater purpose.

The consequences of human actions: The conflict between Sarah and Hagar and the subsequent expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael demonstrate the consequences of human actions. Sarah's jealousy and mistreatment of Hagar created tension and division within the family. It serves as a reminder for us to consider the potential consequences of our actions and to seek God's guidance in our relationships.

God's compassion and provision: Throughout the chapter, we witness God's compassion and provision for Hagar and Ishmael. When they were in desperate need of water, God heard their cries and provided for them. This reminds us that even in our lowest moments, God sees and cares for us. He is a compassionate and providing God.

The complexities of God's plans: The presence of both Isaac and Ishmael as significant figures in God's plan highlights the complexities of His divine purposes. Although Isaac was the chosen heir of the covenant, God did not neglect Ishmael but promised to make him into a great nation as well. This demonstrates God's inclusiveness and the depth of His plans, which may extend beyond our understanding.

Genesis 21 encourages us to trust in God's faithfulness, seek His guidance in difficult decisions, consider the consequences of our actions, rely on His compassion and provision, and recognize the complexities of His plans. It reminds us that God is sovereign and working out His purposes even in the midst of human frailty and imperfection.

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