

**Sunday, July 2, 2023 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**  
**Bible Study**  
**“Quenching a Thirst”**  
**Genesis 22:1-14 and Matthew 10:40-42**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants answer, “Recall an event where the hospitality was excellent. What made the hospitality great? How did the hospitality make you feel?”

**Genesis 22:1-14. Context.** The story of the binding of Isaac is absolutely central to the understanding of the biblical notion of faithful obedience to God. At the age of 99 Abraham finally fathers a son by his wife Sarah; but he already had a son, Ishmael, by Sarah’s slave, Hagar. Abraham is perfectly happy to let Ishmael be his heir, but God, through Sarah, commands Abraham to turn him and his mother out into the desert. Now God asks Abraham to offer his remaining son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. The narrative is sparse, and the dialogue minimal. The story is told against the backdrop of the Israelite understanding that while God requires the offering of the first-born, God has also provided for the redemption of the first-born by the offering of an animal. At the narrative level, of course, Abraham does not know this. Nor does he know that what God has commanded is a “test.” Neither does Isaac. At the same time, Abraham, through the very birth of Isaac in fulfillment of God’s promise, trusts that God will provide, and that somehow, Isaac will return from the mountain with him. Moriah is a symbolic name, which tradition has come to associate with Mt. Zion and Jerusalem.

**Matthew 10:40-42. Context.** This week’s reading is the final exhortation of the “Missionary Discourse,” where Jesus reminds his hearers and readers that all who are disciples of Jesus – including, but not limited to, the preachers, the teachers, and the outstandingly holy ones – represent Christ to the world. And when they do, their reward will be from God. Even the humblest gesture to those in need will not go unrewarded.

**Read Genesis 22:1-14 and Matthew 10:40-42**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the text?

**Read Genesis 22:1-14 and Matthew 10:40-42 again -**

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- What did God ask Abraham to do? (Gen. 22) How did Abraham respond to God's command? The story demonstrates Abraham’s obedience and faith. What offerings are

you willing to give to God as God's disciples? [i.e., your time, your talent, your tithe, and more,]

- Our Gospel scripture (Matthew) is short for this week, but the first verse in our reading gives us insight into the high value and importance of hospitality. *"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me" (Matthew 10:40)*. How can you welcome people in a way that honors their sacred worth and importance to God? How might it look as a church to welcome all the people as Jesus did? What do you see as the "Jesus model" of welcoming people?

*"Now, there are two different responses to this passage. One is to **become bearers of cold water**. Because Jesus raises hospitality to eternal significance, we now take the task of hospitality more seriously. We re-examine our structures at church and ask how we are doing; we enlist more and more people in the task of welcoming until the church understands that it is everyone's responsibility. We take hospitality as seriously as Jesus did.*

*The other response is to **receive hospitality as Jesus tells us to do**. The scripture is literally about receiving hospitality. So, how do we accept the cups of cold water that are given to us? Can Christ be seen in our gratitude as well as our generosity? "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me," says Jesus."*

How are the two responses similar (becoming bearers of cold water or receiving hospitality as Jesus tells us to do)? What are the differences between the two perspectives? Which perspective has a significant impact on you for ministry or at home?

- *"Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple -- truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward" (Matthew 10:42)*. Welcoming people into worship, our church, and our homes, and welcoming new people on our jobs is a skill that is not often discussed. We hope that this lesson shines a new light on your perspective of hospitality. Take time this week to fill in the blanks:
  1. Jesus' model of hospitality challenges me to...
  2. As God speaks to me about hospitality, I will listen for...
  3. As a team, our small group can be welcoming to others by...
  4. Where can we work with the trustees (and other committees) to be more intentional about welcoming? How might our buildings and facilities be more inviting and welcoming?

### **Closing Reflection Question**

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

Lord, open my heart to see each person with sacred worth and welcome them in a way that honors you. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven  
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.