

Sermon Notes: Sunday, May 9
Title: Hey Mom! God Sees You!
Scripture: Genesis 16, The Story of Hagar

Sarai and Hagar

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. **2** And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children^[a] by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. **3** So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. **4** And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.^[b] **5** And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me!" **6** But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.

7 The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. **8** And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." **9** The angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." **10** The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." **11** And the angel of the Lord said to her,

"Behold, you are pregnant

and shall bear a son.

You shall call his name Ishmael,^[c]

because the Lord has listened to your affliction.

12

He shall be a wild donkey of a man,

his hand against everyone

and everyone's hand against him,

and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.”

13 So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,”^[a] for she said, “Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.”^[a] **14** Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi;^[a] it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

15 And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. **16** Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Summary: Hagar was the Egyptian servant of Sarai (later named Sarah), the wife of Abram (who was later named “Abraham”--the father of many nations). Ten years prior to the events in this story, God had visited Abram and Sarai and promised them they would conceive a child--despite their agedness, Sarai’s infertility, and that Sarai was well past the normal age of child bearing. Ten years of waiting on this already hard-to-believe promise, Sarai hatched a plan --perhaps to “help” God’s promise move along by having Abram sleep with Sarai’s servant Hagar. Abram had sexual intercourse with the servant, and Hagar did conceive--so their human solution to God’s apparent inaction, seemed to be working. But (no big surprise here), their human solution of dysfunctional childbearing (though legal) fractured relationships, and Sarai abused Hagar until the latter ran off in desperation to the desert. Bereft of any plan or real hope, Hagar sat weeping in the wilderness, no doubt considering herself utterly alone and doomed. But, then it happened. God saw her. God heard her. He visits Hagar, communes with her in a long dialogue, comforts her, commands her to go back, but delivers her a promise--that her son would be a contentious though powerful man through whom would come multitudes of offspring. Comforted, assured, Hagar gives God a name (a remarkable honor bequeathed to her!): El Roi--the God who sees. And, here is the center of Randy’s message: Hagar seemed invisible, inconsequential, unimportant, bereft of rights, a pawn to be moved and used by the more powerful--then perhaps discarded like refuse into forgetfulness. But, not to God. Our God--the true and the living God--is the one who sees the invisible; who cares deeply--not just for the Hebrews--but for people of all nations, all statuses, all ethnicities, of all circumstances. Randy urged mothers to remember, that God sees their daily struggles and sacrifices of love as they labor to raise their children. Though the world may seem to overlook the toil and accomplishments of motherhood, God sees something far greater: Randy likened mothers to cathedral builders--the unknown laborers who build something exquisitely beautiful, though perhaps even unseen to human eyes. But, God sees. Randy also exhorted us to adopt God’s character, and to see as God sees: To see the treasure in the oft overlooked, unheard, unacknowledged people around us.

Questions:

- (1) What part of Randy’s sermon spoke the most to you?
- (2) Have you ever felt unseen by God? Overlooked? Can you share when this was?
- (3) Randy challenged us to believe that God is at work, even when we don’t think he is or see his hand moving. After all, God seemed to have abandoned his promise to Abram

for ten long years. Have you ever been challenged to trust God is working--even though you don't see Him at work? Explain.

(4) Why do HUMAN solutions so often fail?

(5) Why is it a challenge sometimes to wait in God's promises to be fulfilled?

(6) How has God challenged you to grow in your faith or in your actions and attitudes through this sermon?