

**Sermon Notes of
Guest Speaker Redida Edwards' Sermon on August 29, 2021:**

"The God Who Sees (Genesis 16:1-13)"

[In today's sermon, Guest Speaker Redida Edwards, at church in the Y, shows us through the example of Hagar, our need to continue to enrich our relationship with God especially in difficult times.]

Introduction:

- During these past 6 months, Redida has experienced what she calls “valley seasons”.
- These are the times where there is a crisis such as the death of a loved one, you’re feeling insignificant, you have a job loss or you have health issues.
- Others call these times, “desert seasons.”
- But these types of things are just a part of this earthly life.

- But the good news is that we have a loving Father, who sees and knows exactly what we are going through and He actively participates with us as we’re walking through our trials.
- So, we’re not alone in these seasons.
- Redida chose the story of Hagar, because she can relate to her.

Genesis 16:1 (AMP), Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had not borne him any children, and she had an Egyptian maid (slave) whose name was Hagar. 2) So Sarai said to Abram, “See here, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. I am asking you to go in to [the bed of] my maid [so that she may bear you a child]; perhaps I will obtain children by her.” And Abram listened to Sarai and did as she said. 3) After Abram had lived in the land of Canaan ten years, Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian [maid] and gave her to her husband Abram to be his [secondary] wife.

- This type of action is something we frown upon today, but at this time in history, this was an acceptable practice – this was the custom of the day.

4) He went in to [the bed of] Hagar, and she conceived; and when she realized that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress [regarding Sarai as insignificant because of her infertility]. 5) Then Sarai said to Abram, “May [the responsibility for] the wrong done to me [by the arrogant behavior of Hagar] be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms, and when she realized that she had conceived, I was despised and looked on with disrespect. May the Lord judge [who has done right] between you and me.” 6) But Abram said to Sarai, “Look, your maid is entirely in your hands and subject to your authority; do as you please with her.” So, Sarai treated her harshly and humiliated her, and Hagar fled from her.

- So, Hagar fled because she was being mistreated by Sarai and felt insignificant.
- Now, we, as believers, have to watch what we say and do to other people, because they have long lasting effects in their lives.
- And also, not waiting on the Lord has a long effect on our lives, so we must wait on the Lord and listen to Him, because His timing is always right on.

- Now, when we take things into our own hands, we tend to blame others when it fails.
- So let's just be patient and wait on the Lord.
- That's what this story shows us.

7) But the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, on the road to [Egypt by way of] Shur. 8) And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where did you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am running away from my mistress Sarai." 9) The Angel of the Lord said to her, "Go back to your mistress, and submit humbly to her authority."

- Now, what's so interesting is that this is the first time that the Angel of the Lord had occurred in scripture and he occurred to a woman who was a slave and servant.
- So, this means that God cares and He knows and understands us.
- And then after this chapter the Angel of the Lord appears to Abram.
- And after that the Lord appears to Moses in a burning bush.
- God has power but He also shows us so much compassion.

10) Then the Angel of the Lord said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count." 11) The Angel of the Lord continued, "Behold, you are with child, And you will bear a son; And you shall name him Ishmael (God hears), Because the Lord has heard and paid attention to your persecution (suffering)."

- Hagar was blessed to have this child.
- Now, going back to verse 8, the Angel of the Lord called out to Hagar by her name.
- What's so important is that God knows us by our name.
- By calling Hagar by her name shows how important Hagar was to God.
- And that's how important we are to God – He knows us individually by name.

12) "He (Ishmael) will be a wild donkey of a man; His hand will be against every man [continually fighting] And every man's hand against him; And he will dwell in defiance of all his brothers." 13) Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are [El Roi] God Who Sees"; for she said, "Have I not even here [in the wilderness] remained alive after seeing Him [who sees me with understanding and compassion]?"

- The Hebrew word "El Roi" means more than just the "God who sees" but rather "the God who sees me."
- Commentaries tell us that God is a God who sees, who never sleeps, the God who is aware, the God who is great and the God who is Omni-present.
- Yes, God is all knowing; He knows our cares and our needs and meets us where we're at.
- Hagar fled and we, too, want to flee from our problems.
- But, when we go through these valley seasons of life, we need to run to the arms of the Father, because He's there for us.
- We will get overwhelmed if we just rely on our own devices – that's why we need to trust in the Lord.
- God loves us and He sees us.

- Our Father walks with us on the mountain top of our victories and in the valleys of our difficulties.
- What we need to do is to fix our eyes on Jesus and remembers God's plan.
- Jesus said that he would never leave us nor forsake us, which means we have to trust and believe in Him and wait for His timing.
- Now Redida knows that this is easier said than to do.
- It's hard when we are going through those difficult valleys.
- Even though this is so hard, we have to pray fervently in those times for God's grace and His strength and His wisdom, so that our faith will be unshakable, which can only happen through the Holy Spirit.
- Yes, we have to fix our eyes on Jesus and the promises of God.
- We have to trust, we have to listen, and we have to believe.
- We're just like Paul, who had a thorn in his side – we have them, too.
- Now, did God take Paul's thorn away?
- No, but God changed Paul's perspective and gave him strength to endure.
- During our valley seasons, when we pray to God, He will give us strength to endure, just as He did for Paul and others.
- Redida believes God purges our hearts to refine us, so that our character becomes more like His – so that we can become active participants in living out the Gospel.
- Our valley seasons refine us and help us to put our trust in God.
- Now Hagar's reality didn't change – she still was a maid servant and had to return to be under Sarai's authority.
- But, she had a visitation from the Lord who gave her hope and a different outlook on her situation.
- Jesus is our hope, He's our trust, He's our life – He's the truth, the Way and the Life.
- And when we look at our life's situations through His lens, He will give us a different outlook on life.
- God knows us, He sees us, He love us – but we have to believe it and yield to His authority, and continue to grow in faith.
- We need to remember, He is the God who sees – He sees all, our mountain tops and our valleys – He's there.

Music Video: "The God Who Sees" (Kathie Lee Clifford; Nicole C. Mullen)

*Hagar was a single mother
 She was abandoned by the family she belonged to
 And there in the wilderness with her son alone
 With very little provision
 She was wondering
 She was questioning
 Does anyone care?*

*She's crying in the desert
 She's lost in her despair
 She thinks nobody loves her*

*Hagar thinks nobody's there
But God says*

*I will be a ring of fire around her
And I will be the glory in her midst
And the power of my presence
Will bring her to her knees
And I will lift her up again
For I'm the God who sees
I'm the God who sees*

*Then He speaks in gentle whispers
And He softly calls her name
She feels His arms enfold her
As He holds her
And she'll never be the same*

*'Cause I'm the God who never changes
And My promises are true
And when this world deserts you
This is what I'll do*

*And there is another woman named Ruth
She was from the land of Moab
And she was met with grief and heartache
She was a widow and she lived with her mother-in-law, who was also a widow
And now it was time to move on
But Ruth had never been to Bethlehem
She had never tasted of the House of Bread*

*But now she had heard an inner invitation to come and taste and see
And so she vowed herself to her mother-in-law
And she said where you go I will go
Where you lie I will lie
Where you die I will die
And she begins a journey to the Promised Land*

*She's traveling through the desert
And she's leaving her despair
She's hoping for a future
Praying God will lead her there
And He says*

*I will put a ring around you finger
And I will bless a child within your womb
And the Savior will be born through you
To free the world from sin
And He'll make all things new for you
And love you back to life again, again*

*And then from Ruth who gave birth to a son
 Obed who gave birth to a son
 Jesse who gave birth to a son
 Named David*

*Now the same, once shepherd boy
 Mighty warrior, anointed king is alone
 Terrified in the darkness*

*He's hiding in the desert
 He's battling despair
 David thinks his life is over, it's over
 And God, He doesn't care
 But God says
 I will be the Rock of your salvation
 I'll hold you up by the strength of My right hand
 And the power of My Spirit
 Will free you from all fear
 In the hour of your deepest need
 You'll find that I am near
 I am here*

*And I will be a ring of fire around you
 And I will be the glory in your midst
 And the power of My presence
 Will bring you to your knees
 Then I will lift you up again
 For I'm the God who sees*

*And then from the line of David
 Finally, Jesus the Messiah
 The Anointed One, Yeshua, the Christ
 Born in the same House of Bread to be the Bread of Life
 In the town of Bethlehem
 And He would grow
 And He would be called the Son of God
 He would be called Emmanuel, God With Us*

*And He would heal, and He would reveal
 And then He had an encounter with a woman
 Named Mary of Magdalen who was plagued by demons
 Tormented by evil spirits, and Jesus set her free
 And Mary followed Him, she listened at His feet
 She served Him, and she loved Him
 Oh how she loved Him
 But then she watched as they nailed Him to the cross
 And as they placed His body in the tomb
 In that moment her hope died, it died*

*She's crying in the garden
 She's broken in despair
 She's searching for her Savior*

*But His body isn't there
Then He says, Mary*

*Glory, glory, glory, Hallelujah
I will be the glory in Your midst
And every knee will bow to Me
And every tongue confess
Yes all the world will worship Me
In all My Holiness*

*I will be a ring of fire around you
And I will be the glory in your midst
And the power of My presence
Will bring you to your knees
And I will lift you up again
For I'm the God who sees, who sees
I'm the God who sees
Oh I'm the God who sees, I see you*

*I'm the God who sees you in your wilderness
Sees you in your brokenness
When you're feeling lonely, I'm the God who sees
In the desert places, in your empty spaces
I'm the God who sees
I'm nearer than you dare believe
Here in the very air you breathe
I'm the God who sees
You*

Closing prayer: