

The God who helps me see.

5.16.2021

Genesis 21:8–21 (CSB)

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL SENT AWAY

⁸The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned. ⁹But Sarah saw the son mocking—the one Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham. ¹⁰So she said to Abraham, “Drive out this slave with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a coheir with my son Isaac!”

¹¹This was very distressing to Abraham because of his son. ¹²But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed about the boy and about your slave. Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her, because your offspring will be traced through Isaac, ¹³and I will also make a nation of the slave’s son because he is your offspring.”

¹⁴Early in the morning Abraham got up, took bread and a waterskin, put them on Hagar’s shoulders, and sent her and the boy away. She left and wandered in the Wilderness of Beer-sheba. ¹⁵When the water in the skin was gone, she left the boy under one of the bushes ¹⁶and went and sat at a distance, about a bowshot away, for she said, “*I can’t bear to watch* the boy die!” While she sat at a distance, she wept loudly.

¹⁷God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What’s wrong, Hagar? Don’t be afraid, for God has heard the boy crying from the place where he is. ¹⁸Get up, help the boy up, and grasp his hand, for I will make him a great nation.” ¹⁹**Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well.** So she went and filled the waterskin and gave the boy a drink. ²⁰God was with the boy, and he grew; he settled in the wilderness and became an archer. ²¹He settled in the Wilderness of Paran, and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Introduction: For the second time we encounter Hagar.

A. Hagar was Sarah’s slave.

1. Hagar was the mother of Ishmael, through Abraham.

2. But he never was the son of promise.
3. God had promised a son of faith through Abraham and Sarah.
4. But, as we too often do, Sarah and Abraham took God's plan into their own hands.
 - a. This wasn't Hagar's fault.
 - b. It also wasn't Ishmael's fault.
 - c. The blame here goes to Abraham and Sarah.
5. **When we get ahead of God, we make a mess.**

B. Genesis 21 says that in God's appointed time, He fulfilled His promise.

1. Gen. 21:1 The LORD came to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised.
2. Even though Sarah was 90 and Abraham 100, they had a baby.
 - a. This baby was not like Jesus.
 - b. This baby was made in the "conventional" way, which is still a miracle.
 - c. When Genesis says that God did what he had said and fulfilled what he had promised, this is a BIG DEAL.

C. The problem is that Abraham had already tried to fulfill God's promise.

1. Ishmael was between the age 13-16 right now.
2. Ishmael was giving Isaac fits.
3. **Question: When God gives you the promise, what do you do with the compromise?**

1. Abraham elects to send Hagar and Ishmael away.

A. Scripture says that this was Sarah's idea.

1. The New Testament hold Sarah and Abraham up as great examples of people of faith.

2. But do you see how messy "faith" is?

a. Sarah is not perfect.

b. In fact, she isn't even a nice woman in these stories.

c. At least by our standards, Sarah is not a very good example.

3. This is a reminder that the only person who has ever been perfect is Jesus.

a. God can and does use all sorts of people to carry out his work.

b. And if God can redeem a jealous and insecure woman like Sarah, and call her blessed, He can do incredible things through you.

B. It was Sarah's idea, but it was Abraham who was distressed.

1. Abraham loved Ishmael.

a. Surely they had worked together, played together, and talked together.

b. Ishmael was circumcised like Abraham and shared the rights of a son.

c. Even though he was the compromise, he was still a son of Abraham.

2. But now Abraham is sending Hagar and Ishmael away to die.

B. Startling thought: *The purpose of the little water and little bread was not to get them somewhere safely.*

1. It was so they would die far enough away that they wouldn't have to see it.

2. Abraham knows that he is handing them over to a slow death in the wilderness.

a. This is kind of like dumping a dog.

b. You tell yourself the dog will make it or find a great home somewhere, but that isn't what usually happens.

C. Again, Scripture is brutally honest.

1. *Moses, as he is writing this for the benefit of Israel while they travel in Egypt, is being led by the Holy Spirit to be very honest.*

2. Honest enough to show that Abraham was not perfect.

3. Honest enough to detail that Sarah, their great-grandmother, dealt with extreme jealousy.

4. Honest enough to show that they, Israel, did not deserve to be God's chosen people but were in their position not because of what they had done but because of God's Sovereign grace and mercy.

a. God led Israel out of Egypt not out of worthiness but out of grace.

b. **"The Exodus is about grace, Mt. Sinai is about holiness"**.

c. Grace comes first.

5. When we realize that all of the good we experience is because of the Grace of God, we can stop trying to be our own savior.

a. While we were STILL sinners, Christ died for us.

b. This is the message of the Cross:

c. **Love is never earned, but gifted.**

D. Abraham is a great hero of the faith.

1. The several encounters through Genesis show that Abraham and God had a unique relationship.

2. Abraham is the father of both Jews and Gentiles.

- a. Yet, Abraham was not Jesus.
- b. Only Jesus was perfect.

3. The story of humanity is the story of God using imperfect people.

2. Hagar is in the wilderness.

A. It says she wandered in the wilderness.

1. Think about this again:

2. You are an Israelite, who has been wandering in the wilderness, hearing Moses tell this story.

- a. Here's what they know:
- b. Not once had God let them die of thirst.
- c. Sure, they had been very thirsty.
- d. But each time, God did a miracle.

3. Could it be possible that the audience was expecting a miracle in this passage?

B. Hagar doesn't know this.

1. At some point, Ishmael passes out or becomes too weak to walk.

2. The mom pulls her son under a bush, unable to save him or satisfy his thirst.

3. Then someone cries.

- a. The Hebrew structure is a little confusing about who is crying.
- b. Some say it is Hagar, some say the boy.
- c. More than likely, both are crying as they await death.

3. Then, the God who sees shows up.

A. 13 years before, Hagar meets God for the first time and named Him "El-Roi".

1. God had seen her when she had run away.
2. God saved her when she was rejected the first time.
3. God had saw her then and saved her.

B. Now, God sees her again.

1. Again, God hears her cry.
2. Again, God shows up to a woman who had been rejected, disposed, and mistreated.
 - a. Dare I say, she was rejected by the very people who should have loved her!
 - b. She was rejected by the very people of faith whom through all nations would be blessed.
 - c. God chose to love Hagar and Ishmael even though Sarah hated them.

1. Dare I say, that there are people that God still loves even while the church hates them.

2. Let me tell you about a friend of mine named Kelly who wore the wrong clothes to church one time.

3. The story of Hagar was a reminder to Israel: God loves those that the world hates.

- a. Israel had been slaves in Egypt, but God rescued them by a mighty hand.
- b. Hagar was from Egypt and a slave to Israel, and God saved her with a mighty hand.

C. Whatever your situation, whatever your circumstance, whatever your background and whatever your experience, God is a God who hears you and sees you.

1. Don't let your parents' rejection of you lead you to reject God.
2. Don't let some hateful person at church turn you away from a loving God.
3. Jesus had some harsh words for the descendants of Abraham:
Mat 18:6-7

⁶“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to fall away—it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of offenses. For offenses will inevitably come, but woe to that person by whom the offense comes.¹

4. Abraham didn't want to hear their cries, but God heard the cries of Hagar and Ishmael.

A. Most of the world would have let Ishmael die.

1. He became a source of contention for the families of Abraham.
 - a. In other words, Ishmael wasn't perfect either.
 - b. No one is innocent in this story.
 2. Even To this day, the Muslims trace their lineage through Ishmael.
 - a. I know it is unsavory, but wouldn't it have been better for God to have let Ishmael die?
 - b. Think of how much easier life would be without him?
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- c. Would peace be possible? Would there be less wars?
- d. Would Hamas not be sending rockets into Israel right now if God would have let Ishmael die?

3. In our world, we would have let him die and called it expedient, for the common good, for the best.

- a. In our world, we would have pulled the trigger and asked for forgiveness later.
- b. In our world, we would encourage the abortion.
- c. In our world, we would find some way to assuage our conscience.

B. BUT NOT GOD!!!!

1. When you and I were lost and broken, when we were drug addicts, adulterers, no-goods...
2. When you or I added nothing to society.
3. When we were considered worthless and unworthy, Christ died for us.

- a. *Maybe you have thought that this world would be better without you.*
- b. Maybe you have wondered if anyone would even miss you if you were dead.

C. The ANSWER is: GOD WOULD KNOW!!!

1. He may not be doing everything you want Him to do.
2. He may not be fixing things the way you want them fixed.
3. But God sees you!!!
4. He hears you!!!

5. Scripture says, [Then God opened Hagar's eyes.](#)

A. Verse 19 says "And God opened her eyes and she saw a well.

1. It doesn't say that God made a well appear, although that is possible.

2. It is very likely that Hagar was ready to die even though life was within sight.

a. She was ready to quit.

b. She was done.

c. She had been rejected for the last time.

d. And so, she was ready for this nightmare to be over.

B. BUT GOD OPENED her eyes.

1. Some of you have been in that place.

2. Where you are done and ready to quit.

3. Some of you are in that place right now.

4. My prayer is that God will open your eyes so that you can see the salvation that is right in front of you.

Application: For those of you feeling ready to quit, DON'T.

A. God sees you; he hears you.

1. There are others in this room and congregation that see you too.

2. Don't give up now, when life and salvation is only a prayer away.

3. Don't let yourself be defined by what you have, don't have, done, or haven't done.

B. Instead, see that you are loved because you are fearfully and wonderfully made.

1. You don't need a new identity, a new job, a new career, or a new relationship.

2. What you need is to draw close to the God who is calling out to you.

C. This morning, I want all of us to take a few minutes to pray and reflect.

1. If you find yourself far from God and you don't have a relationship with Him, we want to help lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus.

- a. Because Jesus is perfect, you don't have to be.
- b. Because Jesus died for your sins, you don't have to.
- c. Because Jesus forgives, you don't have to carry that burden any longer.

2. Maybe you have been overwhelmed to the place that you can't see the well in front of you.

- a. The well means life, and you don't have any life right now.
- b. You are trudging through hopelessness, helplessness, and despair.
- c. You are wondering if anyone sees you.
- d. GOD does.