

**Sooke Baptist Church**  
Sunday, October 9, 2022, 10am  
also on Facebook Live Stream and YouTube

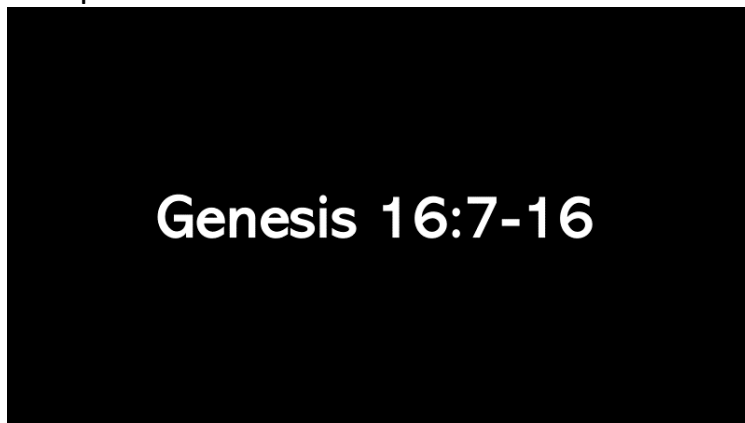
**The God Who Sees Me**  
Genesis 16:7-16

"God sees us as we are,  
loves us as we are, and  
accepts us as we are.  
But by his grace he does  
not leave us as we are."  
Tim Keller

Coffee/Question:  
Why will God not leave us  
as we are?

**03:00**

Recap from last week.



v.7 – the angel of the LORD found Hagar...

Hagar had run away from Sarai.

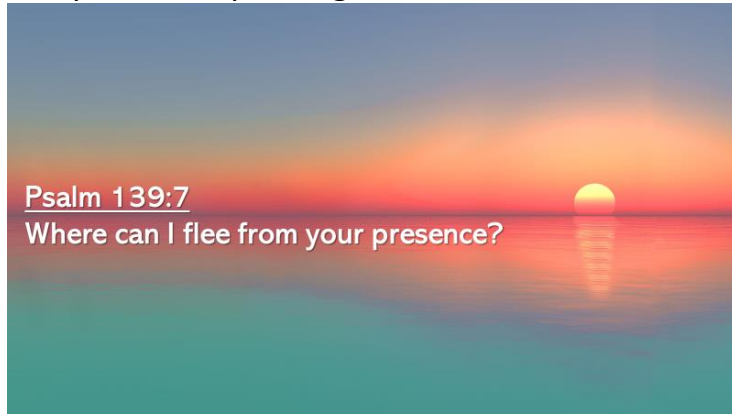
At that moment Sarai didn't know where Hagar was.

But God knew.

This is because there is nowhere that any human being can go where God isn't.

This truth fills our hearts with awe.

The psalmist, speaking to God, wrote... Psalm 139:7:



He listed a number of alternatives: the heaven, the depths, the far side of the sea. But for every possibility he thought of ... God revealed to him – “I am there.” The LORD is like a shepherd who searches after people who are lost.... In order to bring them home to himself.



This truth, that God is everywhere present, can also be terrifying if someone wants to escape God... because they cannot. No one can hide from God.

It may seem like an insignificant detail – that the reader is told exactly where Hagar was when the angel of the LORD found her.



Look at v.7.

Now look at v.14c – The well... is still there... between Kadesh and Bered.

Moses is the human author of the first five books of the OT.

What he wrote was revealed to him by God.

It is significant that Moses would write, four hundred years later, to the family of Abram, which now numbered in the millions, that the well where Hagar was found by the angel of the LORD was still there.

Why did God have Moses record this detail?

To impress upon the reader that this story was not a myth.

Look at v.8a.

The angel of the LORD knew the answer to both of these questions.

So why did he ask?

He asked because God desires relationship with those he has created in his likeness... and relationship always includes conversation.

There is no better way to initiate a conversation than to ask a question.

What we mustn't miss... is ... that in the conversation that followed between the angel of the LORD and Hagar... they never got to the second question.

But when you see the map... the answer is obvious.

Where was Hagar headed?

She was headed home... to Egypt.

At that moment, with those two questions hanging between Hagar and the angel of the LORD... the issue for Hagar was would be truthful with God.

The passage tells us that she was.

Look at v.8b.

What we also mustn't miss is that Hagar didn't elaborate on why she was running away.

Maybe Hagar thought it was obvious... "just look at me!"

Maybe she carried visible bruises on her body.

Maybe she walked with a limp or with a wince.

Maybe her clothing indicated that she was a runaway slave.

It's also interesting to me that the angel of the LORD didn't invite Hagar to elaborate on her story.

You and I probably would have.

Look at what the angel of the LORD did – v.9.

Does it surprise you to read that the angel of the LORD did not encourage Hagar to keep running... to pursue her freedom?

Why would he send her back to continue being a slave?

Why would he ask her to submit to Sarai's authority over her?

The fact that Hagar had run tells us she feared Sarai more than the risk she faced traveling as a single woman.

How are we to understand the LORD and what he asked of Hagar?

Because she is not alone.

Those whom the LORD invites into relationship with himself are often faced with the doing of hard things, of being sent into difficult circumstances.

Again, we must ask... why does the LORD do this?

Consider what Paul and his team learned about the LORD centuries later.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9

We were under great pressure,  
far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired  
of life itself... But this happened that we might not  
rely on ourselves,  
but on God,  
who raises the dead.

The circumstances faced by Paul and his team were so intense, so crushing that they thought they would not survive.

I can't help but think Hagar must have felt the same way.

God permitted Paul and team to experience what they experienced because there was no other way to break their innate self-reliance.

Wouldn't the LORD have had the same goal in mind for Hagar?

If she went home and submitted to Sarai, this would be the means by which she would learn to rely on the LORD and prove his faithfulness and experience his blessing.

When we think of our own unique challenges, even those things that at this moment threaten to overwhelm us... like a soft breeze that refreshes... the Scripture reveals that God intends them for good and for the saving of many lives... and by faith we hold onto God and his promises.

There is an urban legend that has circulated that I've heard repeated many times. It goes something like this – God will not give you more than you can handle. The truth which God reveals to his people ... is that he will.

The LORD does so... not because he is uncaring, or careless. He does so because he has committed himself to first awaken our dead spirit, to forgive our sins through Jesus, and then, through the indwelling Spirit of God to cure our sin-diseased soul and forge in us a new character that is like the character of Jesus... a character which delights to obey God.



John Piper writes this about God's work within his followers.

**The LORD is active in his people like a refiner's fire.**

**A refiner's fire does not destroy indiscriminately like a forest fire.**

**A refiner's fire does not consume completely like the fire of an incinerator.**

**A refiner's fire refines... in order to purify.**

**A refiner's fire melts down silver or gold, separating out and burning up the impurities that ruin its value.** <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/he-is-like-a-refiners-fire>

The fact that it requires such radical means on the part of God to transform us... is a testimony to how radically sin has invaded and corrupted the human nature.

We understand by faith that what God asked Hagar to do was not cruel, but was a loving request.

And it was received by Hagar as such... as evidenced by her awe filled response to God as she gave to him a name.

The angel of the LORD was not done... he had more to say to Hagar.



Look at v.10.

Does this promise sound familiar to you?

The LORD more than ten years earlier had said to Abram...

**Genesis 13:16**

**I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.**

**Genesis 15:5**

**Look up at the sky and count the stars – if indeed you can count them. So shall your offspring be.**

Because Abram believed God... he was considered righteous by God.

Every indication is that Hagar also believed God as evidenced by her obedience.

Hagar knew she was pregnant.

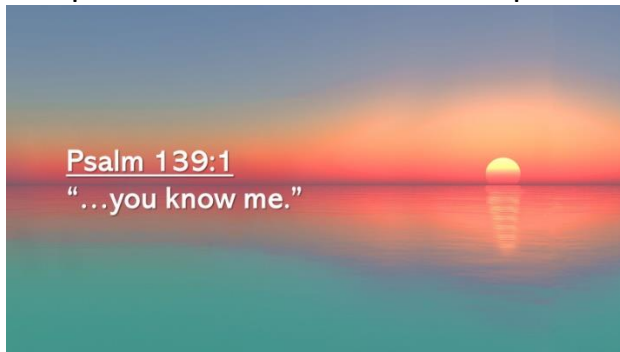
But the angel of the LORD told here, look at v.11a..... you will have a son.

Maybe Hagar had started thinking of names for her baby, maybe she hadn't. But the angel of the LORD commanded her, look at v.11b....  
... you shall name him Ishmael.

Ishmael means "God hears."  
What had God heard?  
Look at v.11c....

The LORD wanted Hagar to know that he was not a long way away. He had heard her ... her cries, her tears, her frustrations, her anger. Hagar was not forgotten. The LORD knew her – her name; her station in life; her circumstances. She mattered to God; he valued her. This is who God is.

The psalmist would write this simple but profound truth about God.



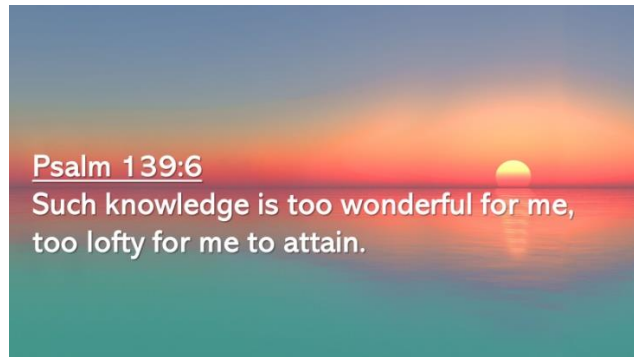
What was true of the psalmist was true of Hagar... and is true of every person.

Our Creator knows each one of us... intimately.  
He knows how many hairs are on your head.

He knows your dreams and aspirations.  
He knows your fears.  
He knows your every thought.  
He knows every word you say.

He knows how long you will live and what will happen to you every day.  
There is not a detail of your life which is unknown to God.  
Does that not leave you in awe of God?  
It did the psalmist.

He wrote...



This is the One who holds your life, my life, our lives... in his hands.

While the LORD didn't change Hagar's circumstances... and didn't explain to her why not, and this often is the same with you and me... the fact that the LORD heard Hagar... brought hope to her heart.

We know this because she went home and submitted to Sarai.

Do you realize that God's interaction with Hagar and her response to the LORD, also foreshadowed how the LORD would meet Abram's descendants in the wilderness, just as the LORD had met Hagar.... and that he would call them to obey him and place their lives in his hands... just as he had done with Hagar.

The story of the Bible reveals the astounding wisdom of God who worked across centuries upon centuries to rescue the fallen son and daughters of Adam and Eve. The Bible tells one story... and it is the most amazing story ever told.

The angel of the LORD also foretold to Hagar... who her child would become. Look at v.12.

Bruce Waltke wrote this about the angel of the LORD's prophecy... "Ishmael's passion for freedom led him into conflict with everyone..." p.255 ... including his family.

What was foretold by the angel of the LORD came to pass.

When Hagar returned home, she told Abram and Sarai of her encounter with the angel of the LORD.

We know this because of v.15.



Hagar repeated to Abram and Sarai God's command to her – "you shall name your son Ishmael."

And Abram in obedience to God, gave that name to his son when he was born.

The boy's name – Ishmael – would have been a constant, audible reminder, not just to his mom, Hagar, but to Abram and Sarai, that God hears.

God had heard Hagar's tears and her cries when she had been mistreated.

God had heard Sarai take out her anger on Hagar.

God had likewise heard the heart frustrations voiced by Sarai and Abram as they waited on God to fulfill his promise to them.

The name Ishmael was a reminder to them that in those long years of waiting they too had not been forgotten.

God heard them.

Look at v.13-14.

"Hagar is the only woman in the OT who confers a name upon God."

Waltke, p.256.

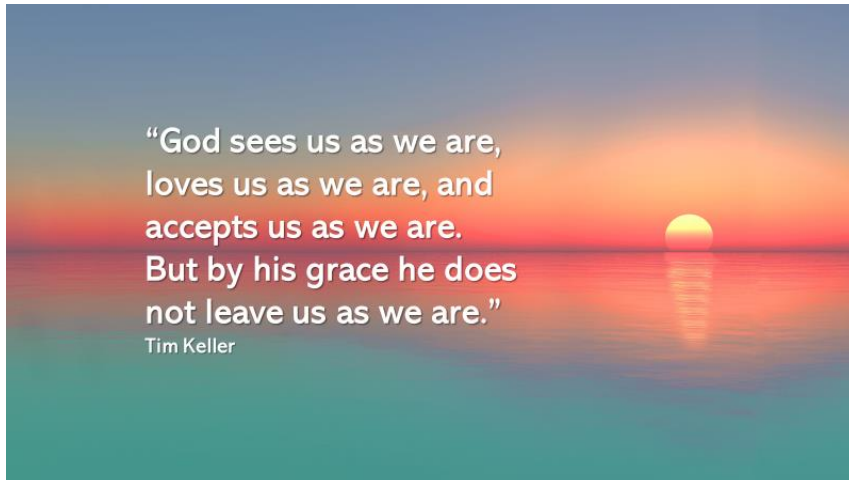


God made known to Hagar, that he not only heard her, but he also saw her.

This name – El Roi... was not something Hagar whimsically made up.

She called the LORD, "El Roi" because this is who God had revealed himself to be.

Remember our coffee/question.



The glory of God since our first parents disobeyed him... is that he saves one ruined life at a time.

God is not naïve.

He sees as we are.

And he chooses to love us... because that is who he is.

In grace he does for us... what we cannot do for ourselves... he forgives our sin, and then tells us, "Go and sin no more."

But with the command... he provides in the person of the Holy Spirit the means to do so.

God doesn't gloss over what sin has ruined in us and through us.

Rather he purposes, through Jesus Christ... to recreate and make new... and in this way undo what sin has corrupted.

The good news regarding God's salvation in Jesus Christ is that there is no one too far gone; no one beyond the gospel's transforming power.

Hagar's encounter with the angel of the LORD forever changed her life.

The same God who met Hagar near a spring on the road to Shur, continues to search after and find other spiritual runaways... to this very day... all over the earth... in the most surprising and unexpected places.

Where did he find you?

When did he call you by name?

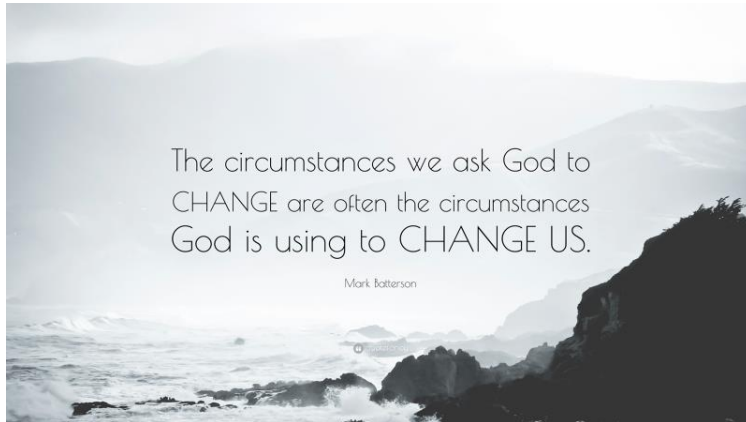
When did you first marvel that he heard you... and saw you... and loved you... in spite of the fact that you had ran from him.

Isn't God incredible?

And having been found, the LORD commands us, not to stay where we are, but to come home to him and to submit our lives to his lordship.

When we do, oh the blessings we experience.

This is not to say there won't be difficulties, for there will be.



Those difficulties that visit, not just once, but many times, will not just stretch our faith in God, but are intended to grow it.

That said, I remind you the blessings of obedience far surpass the short-lived pain of God's refining work within us... as he forges and builds a character that is becoming in reality what he has declared us to be in Christ – righteous.

God sees us.

God loves us.

God accepts us.

And praise the LORD... by his grace he doesn't leave as we are.