

Case Study: Hagar – The Lord Sees Me

Description

6 But Abram said to Sarai, See here, your maid is in your hands and power; do
7 But the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness o
8 And He said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, where did you come from, and where are you
9 The Angel of the Lord said to her, Go back to your mistress and [humbly] sub
10 Also the Angel of the Lord said to her, I will multiply your descendants ex
11 And the Angel of the Lord continued, See now, you are with child and shall
12 And he [Ishmael] will be as a wild ass among men; his hand will be against
13 So she called the name of the Lord Who spoke to her, You are a God of seein
14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi [A well to the Living One Who
15 And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son whom Hagar

Genesis 16:6-15 AMPC

The story of Hagar is often a small blip in the larger story of Abraham and Sarah. Hagar is often seen as a moment in time, and unfortunate situation. Usually observed more in regards to the sin, lack of faith/obedience of Abraham, or short-sightedness of Sarah. We as Christians have some work to do with how we see individuals in the Bible, and re-framing the ways that we see and read some of the passages in the Bible. I want to take a moment to help you re-frame a passage in the Bible that we often undervalue, and hopefully it can help you view Hagar properly, and see God properly in your next time of trouble.

Hagar was a slave/servant in Abraham's house, and most likely had been acquired by them during their time in Egypt during a previous famine. Hagar was likely a child when she started working in Abraham's household, and spent alot of time in close proximity to Abraham and Sarah given that she was Sarah's maid. We clearly see that Hagar's voice was robbed from her as we observed Sarah's conversation with Abraham where she offers him Hagar's body as a solution to their childless issue. Hagar's body is violated by both Abraham and Sarah, and insult to injury, she doesn't even have input over the child that her body produces, because she is practically a surrogate for Sarah. Insult to injury, Hagar produces a son for Abraham and Sarah, and it leads to resentment from Sarah, the person who contrived the plan the in first place. Sarah was so enraged at the success of her own scheme that she gives Abraham an ultimatum before beginning an attack involving physical, emotional, mental, and verbal abuse. Abraham abandons his role of leader of the household, and defender of the oppressed, and silently observes as Hagar is ultimately abused until she decides to run away for her own safety and sanity. Let's slow down here to take away the lessons from the story:

- the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness (v7) – In the Bible, we often see wildernesses related to seasons of confusion, temptation, and/or testing. In this scene, the wilderness is the place where Hagar is found, and she realizes that she is seen. In a place where most people go to flee, and are oftentimes lost or forgotten, Hagar experiences a personal encounter with God.
- where did you come from, and where are you intending to go (v8) – whenever we feel the urge to run, or give up, we must take a breath, enter a season of prayer, and ask ourselves what are

leaving, and where are we headed. The angel was well aware of the answer to both of these questions, possibly not where Hagar was going because I would imagine that not even she knew where she intended to go. If we don't know where we're at, or coming from, and how we got there, then we are at risk of repeating our situation. Now Hagar was unique in that I don't believe she was responsible for her slave status, and she definitely wasn't responsible for what Sarah and Abraham had done to her. I believe that this moment was more important in showing that nothing we do, and no place where we may find ourselves escapes God's gaze.

- Go back to your mistress and [humbly] submit to her control (v9) – I include this verse, fully aware of the toxic religious sentiment that has surrounded terms such as submission, and loving and forgiving others despite how they may treat you. This verse is significant not because God is asking Hagar to accept and tolerate abuse, but because this verse is demonstrating two principles that are explained later in the Bible: work/do everything unto God, not unto man (Colossians 3:22-23), and that we only move when we are released by God. God cared for Hagar and was grieved at Sarah's treatment of her, yet he had not released Hagar from this season in her life. Despite our current situations and sometimes treatment, we must still be obedient to the authority and directions of God.
- shall call his name Ishmael [God hears], because the Lord has heard and paid attention to your affliction (v11) – repeat that to yourself, "God hears." Earlier I said that a wilderness typically symbolizes confusion, tests, or lost, however God chooses to visit Hagar when she needed him the most. Not only did God see Hagar in this moment, but he affirms to her that he saw her previous pain and experiences, and he heard her pleadings/prayers. God's proclamation in this verse goes beyond a feel good moment for Hagar and extends into a promise for her son and future descendants.
- So she called the name of the Lord Who spoke to her, You are a God of seeing (v13) – We see here that Hagar has experienced a perspective shift in the way that she see's God and how she feels that God see's her. Realizing that we are seen by God changes our whole outlook on life, and perspective of ourselves. When we see God right, we can begin to see ourselves healthily, and walk with God in a way that honors him and helps us to bear fruit consistent with his promises.

Reflection Time

Do you feel like God sees you currently, or saw you in previous moments of pain? What experiences in life has confirmed God's presence/existence, or caused you to doubt him? Study God's word so that you can become familiar with his promises, and voice so that you recognize him when he appears. Do the work so that your view of God isn't dictated or overly impacted by your experiences with others. In whatever season of life you may be in, I recommend that you remain faithful to God's instructions which have the power to sustain and deliver you in spite of any circumstance you find yourself in.

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