

A God Who Sees

Introduction: One of the most difficult messages of the year to preach is the message on Mother's Day.

For some Mother's Day isn't at all easy. I have had some women even say they stay away from church on Mother's day because it is too hard.

Thank you for coming today because there are many reasons why this day can be hard.

- For some, you have recently lost your mother and the pain is still deep and the wound is fresh.
- Others may have very hurtful memories or may even be estranged from mothers or children.
- Still others here may long to be a mother but have never, for a variety of reasons been able to have a child and that pain, too, is great.
- In addition, of course many of us will never be Mother's because we are men.

But, we were all once children and as children **we like to be watched!**

“Hey ,mom! Look at this!” “Watch me do this!”

- And no matter what goofy thing we did, our mother's watched us do it.
- We all know what it is like being a kid and wanting to be seen
- Some of you are moms and you wonder if you are ever seen!

Nicole Johnson in—Invisible wrote this:

It all began to make sense—the blank stares, the lack of response, the way one of the kids will walk into the room while I am on the phone and ask to be taken to the store. And inside I am thinking, Can't you see? I am on the phone. Obviously not. No one can see if I am on the phone or cooking or sweeping the floor or even standing on my head in the corner because no one can see me at all. I am invisible.

Some days I am only a pair of hands, nothing more. 'Can you fix this? Can you tie this? Can you open this?' Some days I am not a pair of hands; I am not even a human

being; I am a clock to ask, 'What time is it?' I am a satellite guide to answer, 'What number is the Disney Channel?' I am a car-to-order—'right around 5:30 please.' I was certain that these were the hands that once held books and the eyes that studied history and the mind that graduated. But now they had all disappeared into the peanut butter never to be seen again. She's going, she's going, she's gone.

- Maybe you feel that way—maybe you don't.
- Take a few minutes and look at our text about a mother and her child and find that it is relevant to us all

I. **Hagar: A Mother-Broken and Misunderstood**

A. Hagar is the central figure of this text—a passage that is rarely preached or taught

1. She is fleeing from a place where she has been used to produce a child for a couple that could not have their own—or so it seemed.
2. She has been poorly treated by Sarah who was now jealous of her because she was pregnant with the child she wanted.
3. She is a slave with no rights, no dignity, no freedom and was simply referred to by both Abraham and Sarah as “the maid” or the “Egyptian.”
4. She served a purpose and now had run away and they might not have even noticed

B. Hagar runs and it seems she doesn't even know what she wants but she does know what she doesn't want—to be ignored, to be mistreated, to be unimportant or forgotten.

C. She may not have known what her greatest need was until she met the One who met that need

“Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, “Have I also here seen Him who sees me?” Therefore the well was called Beer Labai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered.” Genesis 16:13-14 NKJV

D. Hagar may have felt very unimportant but was actually very significant

1. Longest conversation with God of any woman in the OT and almost more than any man.
2. Only person in the Bible who gives God a name
 - He gave Himself names
 - **Elohim** (the Creator), **Yahweh** (the covenant maker) **El Shaddai** (the Almighty)

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3. Those are powerful, majestic and grand names—but that is NOT what Hagar needed
4. She needed a God who saw her, who was intimate with her and personal
5. *“I have now seen the God who sees me.”*

II. **Hagar: A Mother Who Represents Every Human Heart**

- A. Many today live their lives like there is no one out there who sees them—as if there is no God.
 1. They may even wear that belief proudly but down deep there is in all of us a desire to be seen—to be watched by someone
 2. All humans know that *“Man looks on the outward appearance,” —1 Samuel 16:7*
 3.
 - a. We judge based on what we see
 - b. We criticize
 - c. We are attracted to beauty
 - d. We judge people without knowing their motives
 4. Many don’t know the rest of that text—*But God looks on the heart* (He sees)
 - a. Many young people grow up not knowing God does see
 - b. He does notice the heart even when their peers only see the outside

(ILL) I remember being picked last for wiffle ball gym or kickball—I knew what they were judging that based on

5. But God sees our secret world (that is why Jesus said this—not just to guilt us into prayer time)

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”
Matthew 6:6 NKJV

- B. There is a universal need of all humanity—to be seen or noticed
 1. Why we say...” look mommy!”
 2. We don’t want others to notice as much as our mom or dad
 3. My parents at every baseball game
 4. My dad in his work clothes sitting in the bleachers
 5. That is what mattered
 6. I want to be seen by my mom...by my dad

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(ILL)Parents: Put that picture on your refrigerator, look at their silliness, listen to their stories no matter how many times they stutter through it. They want to be seen!

William Tammus (Presbyterian elder and columnist)—“You don't really understand human nature unless you know why a child on a merry-go-round will wave at his parents every time around and why his parents will always wave back.”

(ILL)-my parents still stand at the door and wave until we can't see them any longer

- Why do we need to be seen?
- Why do we long for a God who sees and what difference does that make?
- To be seen makes a great difference because to be seen is to be important, significant, to have our roots known!

God saw us before anyone else could and He continues to watch us!

“My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.” Psalms 139:15-16 NKJV

“O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways.” Psalms 139:1-3 NKJV

C. For those who don't trust God, His watching eye is scary (or even creepy)

(ILL) Oh be careful little eyes what you see, ears what you hear, hands what you do

- For your Father up above is Looking down IN LOVE (???)
- Or plaque (Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal and the silent listener to every conversation.” (Little creepy)

1. His eyes are loving (children of Israel while in exile for their sin we're still being watched by God)

“For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up.” Jeremiah 24:6 NKJV

2. His eyes are on us and those we love

1. Kyle at IWU
2. Kayla—I knew He watched over her

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III. Hagar: A Mother Who Reminds Us What it Means to Be Seen

It Means:

A. To be Quieted by God and Understood

“The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”
Zephaniah 3:17 NKJV

“The Lord looks down from heaven and sees the whole human race. From his throne he observes all who live on the earth. He made their hearts, so he understands everything they do.” Psalms 33:13-15 NLT

- Sometimes we are anxious and nervous but the assurance of His gaze quiets our anxious hearts
- Sometimes we fear no one understands—He made us and He does—He knows we are dust
- Hagar knew God understood—**He was the God who sees**

B. To be Released from the restraints of others and free to know Him

1. 2 Samuel 6—David returning ark to Jerusalem
2. He worshipped for an audience of one

“But as the Ark of the Lord entered the City of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked down from her window. When she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she was filled with contempt for him.” 2 Samuel 6:16 NLT

“When David returned home to bless his own family, Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet him. She said in disgust, “How distinguished the king of Israel looked today, shamelessly exposing himself to the servant girls like any vulgar person might do!” David retorted to Michal, “I was dancing before the Lord, who chose me above your father and all his family! He appointed me as the leader of Israel, the people of the Lord, so I celebrate before the Lord. Yes, and I am willing to look even more foolish than this, even to be humiliated in my own eyes! But those servant girls you mentioned will indeed think I am distinguished!” 2 Samuel 6:20-22 NLT

3. His concern was not others or even his own comfort— it was that God would be pleased because God saw him

C. To be strengthened by His presence

“The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.” 2 Chronicles 16:9 NLT

D. Being seen by Him should give you courage not make you cringe—It did Hagar. She went back to live in the home of Abraham and Sarai

IV. Hagar: A Mother who Found God to be All-Sufficient

“When Isaac grew up and was about to be weaned, Abraham prepared a huge feast to celebrate the occasion. But Sarah saw Ishmael—the son of Abraham and her Egyptian servant Hagar—making fun of her son, Isaac. So she turned to Abraham and demanded, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son. He is not going to share the inheritance with my son, Isaac. I won’t have it!” This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son. But God told Abraham, “Do not be upset over the boy and your servant. Do whatever Sarah tells you, for Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted. But I will also make a nation of the descendants of Hagar’s son because he is your son, too.” So Abraham got up early the next morning, prepared food and a container of water, and strapped them on Hagar’s shoulders. Then he sent her away with their son, and she wandered aimlessly in the wilderness of Beersheba. When the water was gone, she put the boy in the shade of a bush. Then she went and sat down by herself about a hundred yards away. “I don’t want to watch the boy die,” she said, as she burst into tears. But God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, “Hagar, what’s wrong? Do not be afraid! God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Go to him and comfort him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants.” Then God opened Hagar’s eyes, and she saw a well full of water. She quickly filled her water container and gave the boy a drink. And God was with the boy as he grew up in the wilderness. He became a skillful archer, and he settled in the wilderness of Paran. His mother arranged for him to marry a woman from the land of Egypt.” Genesis 21:8-21 NLT

- A. She felt like she could not meet her son’s needs
 - B. She was at the end of her rope—But God showed her what she had been unable to see—a well in the wilderness
 - C. Ishmael discovered the source of life in the desert and was able to be sustained there
 - D. Hagar realized what it meant to be seen by God—when no one else sees or cares or notices, He sees you and knows your need
1. Moms that feel that way today, at the end of your rope-He sees
 2. Women who have not been able to bear children-He sees
 3. Those who have lost mothers and the pain is great-He sees

QUESTION: What about those situations where it seems like God does not see?

- The hungry
- The trafficked
- The lost
- The addicted

He does see-He looks for us to see as well and show them His love—they are looking for God in the wrong place and we can point them to a seeing God.

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— Isaiah to the people of Judah regarding the folly of serving idols:

“Then he takes what’s left and makes his god: a carved idol! He falls down in front of it, worshiping and praying to it. “Rescue me!” he says. “You are my god!” Such stupidity and ignorance! Their eyes are closed, and they cannot see. Their minds are shut, and they cannot think.” Isaiah 44:17-18 NLT

- Those hurting are not invisible to God
- He is a seeing God
- Hagar realized He sees me and He knows my name

IMPORTANT: Just because you don’t see Him does not mean He is not there

- To be seen does not mean you don’t fall
- He sees every sparrow that falls (not that no sparrow falls)
- Falling is a part of life but He sees and He stands ready to pick us up

E. Sometimes our pain keeps us from seeing God

1. Thomas after Jesus died (its all over, we have lost all)
2. Unless I see His hands I will not believe!
3. Job’s unimaginable pain prevented him from seeing God until the end

“I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.” Job 42:5 NLT

V. Hagar: A Mother who Saw the God Who Saw Her

A. Him seeing you will make no difference unless you look back and see Him

1. One day every eye will see Him
2. But we can now
3. Jesus said-if you have seen me you have seen the Father

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.” Psalms 32:8 NKJV

- a. What does that mean?
- b. If I look back and see Him, I will see what He is looking at, what concerns Him
- c. I will go where He wants me to do

(ILL) The disciples passed by the Samaritan woman looking for food but Jesus saw her and changed her—told disciples—look on harvest fields

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- B. He sees us—He only asks that we see Him
 - 1. We don't have to climb into a tree like Zaccheus
 - 2. He was lifted up for all to see on a cross
 - 3. Look and live

C. His look challenges us and forgives us

(ILL) Peter—I won't deny you

- Then he couldn't hide in a crowd (if you really know Jesus you can't)
- Three times

“Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, “Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying!” Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So Peter went out and wept bitterly.” Luke 22:59-62 NKJV

What did that look say to Peter?

- I knew you would fail? NO!
- I am so disappointed in you Peter? NO!
- It said—“I know you still love me and I am looking at you and you looked back and I still have plans for you!”

Conclusion: Have you looked back to see the God who sees you?

1. Are your eyes focused on the God who sees you or you still looking for something else to satisfy?
2. God sees you today and He is looking with a gaze of love
3. When you see you believe; when you believe you see!
4. Hagar longed to be seen and she met the God who sees.

“She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me.” Genesis 16:13 NIV