

“GOD SEES YOU”**Pastor Mike Corwin****TEXT: GENESIS 21:8-21****GOD’S WORD: GENESIS 16:1-16****I – GENESIS 16:**

The video you just saw, the song you just heard refers to a story from the Old Testament. From the very first book of the Bible. Pastor Becky just read you the start of that story.

God had promised Abraham and Sarah a child in their old age. Sarah was getting impatient and I don’t know that she trusted God as much as her husband did. So she told Abraham to take her servant Hagar and sleep with her in the hopes God would keep his promise to give them a child and do it through Hagar. Abraham did as his wife asked and did take Hagar as a wife and did sleep with her, and she did become pregnant. Then we see that domestic trouble started in. I’m guessing Sarah was not happy that Hagar had done what she was supposed to do and it says that Hagar started treating Sarah with some contempt as well. Their relationship continued to deteriorate and Sarah complained to Abraham about it, who pretty much washed his hands of the whole mess and reminded Sarah that Hagar was her servant and to do what she wanted to do. And she did! She treated Hagar so bad that she ran away.

God’s angel came to her beside a spring of water and told her she needed to go back. Told her that she was indeed pregnant with a son, who she should name Ismael, the Bible points out that the name means “God Hears”, and that God would bless him and make from him a vast number of descendants. Hagar’s reaction is to realize that this is “The God Who Sees.” She realizes this is the God who sees her and intervenes with her as she is having problems.

II – TEXT:

And a few chapters later we see the rest of the story...

Genesis 21:8-21 (NLT)

⁸When Isaac grew up and was about to be weaned, Abraham prepared a huge feast to celebrate the occasion. ⁹But Sarah saw Ishmael—the son of Abraham and her Egyptian servant Hagar—making fun of her son, Isaac. ¹⁰So 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!” ¹¹This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son. ¹²But 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. ¹³But I will also make a nation of the descendants of Hagar’s son because he is your son, too.”

¹⁴So 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. ¹⁵When the water was gone, she put the boy in the shade of a bush. ¹⁶Then 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. ¹⁷But 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. ¹⁸Go to him and comfort him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants.” ¹⁹Then 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.

²⁰And God was with the boy as he grew up in the wilderness. He became a skillful archer, ²¹and he settled in the wilderness of Paran. His mother arranged for him to marry a woman from the land of Egypt.

III – GOD NEVER STOPS SEEING:

In the beginning of the story Hagar says that God is the God who sees her. In the end of the story I take note that he is the God who never stops seeing.

14 years after Ishmael was born, God did exactly as he had promised and Sarah gave birth to a son, Isaac. As the boy is about to be weaned and a feast was being prepared to celebrate the event, Sarah thinks that Hagar and Ishmael are making fun of her son. She again goes to Abraham and demands he get rid of the two. Now he has a son by her and she's not about to share the limelight with this slave and her son.

Abraham is upset over the whole thing. This is after all his son too. But God tells him that it's going to be okay. That he will take care of this son, that he will bless him and make him a great nation too. So the next morning Abraham gets up, gives her some food and water, and sends her and Ishmael off into the wilderness.

She wanders around until the water runs out and death is imminent. She places her son under a bush to die in the shade and then goes a football field away so she doesn't have to hear or see him die. It says she burst in to tears. I'm guessing so. Could you place your son under a bush, knowing he was going to die from lack of water, a basic human need, and not be upset, not shed a tear over his coming death? Neither could she! But the God she had met before in the wilderness the one she called the God who hears, heard her again, the God who she said could see, sees her again. And as before he acts. He calms her. Tells her it will be Okay, opens her eyes and shows her water so she and her son will live.

IV- GOD SEES YOU:

The video you watched gave you all kinds of examples from the Bible of how God saw others who needed him to act. Of others who needed his grace and love. The message I have for you this day is that God still has ears and eyes. God still hears you cry out in your distress, still sees you going through whatever it is that you are going through. And he still cares.

The first time I watched that video it reminded me of all the broken families who are hurting. There's little difference between what Abraham did to Hagar and the spouse or significant other who tells their partner they don't love them anymore and they need to get out or they leave themselves. Little difference between Ishmael and the children who now don't have the love of a parent, or the parent who doesn't know how they will provide medical care, food, or shelter for their child.

How about those who have suffered through Covid. Or even before that, people who have suffered through cancer or other debilitating, life threatening disease?

How about those who go through life crying out with depression or anxiety, or other life altering mental illnesses? Who cry out from addiction? Who cry out from abuse, violence, or poverty? Has God turned a deaf ear? Does God no longer see us?

Just the opposite is true. God still hears, God still sees, God still cares. The biggest problem is large numbers of people today don't see him...don't realize what he's done for them or what he can do for them. The song even points out that the largest problem that we face...our own sin, was taken care of him by him when he sent his one and only Son, Jesus Christ to be our Savior. When he sent Jesus to be our Rock, our Foundation. So that we can turn to him and stop our spiritual crying and suffering. Through that we can find ease for our physical suffering too.

There is no calamity in this life that God will not see...no prayers you can cry that he won't hear...no condition that he doesn't care. We just have to turn to him and seek that help.

V – PRAYER:

I'm going to end this message in a little different way than I usually do. I want you all to bow your heads and close your eyes. Now place your hand on your heart. For the next couple of minutes I want you to think about the issues in your life. The things that trouble you... The things that keep you awake at night... the things that make you cry. Think of the things that you hold on to from your past... The things you don't think God can forgive you for... The things that make you feel unseen or unworthy. Now think of the things that others have done that bring you hurt... Things that you hold on to... Things that keep you in turmoil... things that bring hatred into your soul.

Now...keep your hands on your hearts and let me pray for you and all those things.

Then will go into Pastoral Prayer, and Lord's Prayer.

AMEN