

### Media and Graphics Notes

<b>Word of Witness Video?</b>	No
<b>Sermon Starter Video?</b>	Yes
<b>Sermon Notes?</b>	There are several pictures and scriptures throughout the sermon.
<b>Other Notes</b>	

### Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

#### ***What is this sermon about?***

This sermon is about the God who sees us in the wilderness.

#### ***Why is this sermon important?***

This sermon is important because it can be hard to remember that God is with us in the middle of the wilderness.

#### ***What is the context of this sermon?***

This sermon and worship series have been developed using the sermon series by the same name which was preached at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in 2013.

#### ***What are the next action steps?***

When you are walking through the wilderness trust and hold on to the promise that God sees you.

When you see someone else in the wilderness, be God's messenger to them.

#### ***What is the good news (bottom line)?***

The good news is that God sees you. God walks with you and promises a future with hope. You don't have to be afraid in the wilderness.

#### ***Metadata***

1. Topic(s)
  1. Grow
  2. Share
  3. Changing Lives
  4. Making Disciples
2. Sermon Books of the Bible
  1. Genesis
3. Series



8th Sunday after Pentecost

July 19, 2015

Messages from the Wilderness - The God Who Sees

Genesis 16:1-6

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Preaching Target Word Count: 1,943

Text Online at <http://j.mp/1NxLF5s>

Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1ef2PrO>

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  1. sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, wilderness, messages, presence, promise,

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## Genesis 16:1-6, CEB

Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to have children. Since she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar, Sarai said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from giving birth, so go to my servant. Maybe she will provide me with children." Abram did just as Sarai said. After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took her Egyptian servant Hagar and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife. He slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when she realized that she was pregnant, she no longer respected her mistress. Sarai said to Abram, "This harassment is your fault. I allowed you to embrace my servant, but when she realized she was pregnant, I lost her respect. Let the Lord decide who is right, you or me."

Abram said to Sarai, "Since she's your servant, do whatever you wish to her." So Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from Sarai.

## Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

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## Introduction

### Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

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\*\*\* Start Sermon Timer \*\*\*

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## Series Review

We are in the third week of a series in which we are considering Old Testament characters who passed through the wilderness. The wilderness was a literal, physical place. They spent time in this bleak and barren place.

They were also walking through a place where they felt alone and broken emotionally and spiritually. We are looking at their stories to learn a little bit about our own story. They teach us something about who we are, who God is and how we make it through our own wilderness experiences.

## Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

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## Opening

### Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

### Hide and Seek

Hide and Seek is a game that's been around forever. I loved playing hide and seek when I was growing up. I love playing with my children now. I remember, when I was little, learning something very important about hide and seek.

I was playing hide and seek with my cousins. We were on a trip and had some extra time at a roadside picnic spot. There were some shrubs at the edge of the picnic area I thought I had the perfect hiding place.

There are was (place hands over eyes, hiding face)

I didn't think anyone would be able to find me. Yet, I was the first one that was found. What happened?

I can't remember who told me – maybe my parents, maybe one of my cousins – this very important lesson.

Just because you can't see someone else, doesn't mean they cannot see you.

### Transition

This is a valuable lesson in the game of hide and seek.

We also see it today in the story of Hagar

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## The Story of Hagar

### Context of Storytelling

These stories were written down long after they occurred. During that time, they were told and retold around campfires and family gatherings. Most people didn't have books. They couldn't read. They were told, in part to entertain. They didn't have tv, radio, books. They told stories to entertain. In every one of these stories, there is something that is meant to make you laugh, sometimes scratch your head and ultimately to teach about faith, life, God, God's will and how we deal with the experiences we are going to walk through in our life.

***Transition***

This is true for the story of Hagar that we have before us today. Let's start with what might make us scratch our heads, especially as 21st century people.

**Abraham and Sarah**

Here we have Abraham, or Abram. He is 85 years old. He has not had a child. He is married to Sarah and at this point, she is in her mid-70s. She has been unable to have children.

God had promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have children, yet all these years have gone by and they don't have any children. So, Sarah had a great idea.

***Sarah's Great Idea - Surrogate Motherhood***

Abraham, I want you to sleep with my slave girl, Hagar. Hagar is a young girl from Egypt. She is maybe in her teens or early 20s. She is Sarah's slave. Sarah's great idea is that Abraham can sleep with Hagar and she will be able to have a child for me.

This is sort of like being a surrogate mother.

***Bad News for Hagar***

This is not good news for Hagar. She is a young woman and going to sleep with 85 year old Abraham. This is not something that she wanted to do. She didn't have a choice. She had to do it. Hagar became pregnant with Abraham's child, which would become Sarah's child and would be taken away from Hagar.

***Hagar loses respect for Sarah***

Hagar comes to resent Sarah, which is really no surprise. Sarah has forced Hagar to sleep with Abraham, conceive a child and will force her to give up her child.

Can you see how this really isn't working out very well?

Hagar loses respect for Sarah.

***Sarah and Abraham***

Sarah gets upset about Hagar not respecting her. She goes to Abraham and says, "Your slave girl who has conceived a child is not respecting me anymore. What a terrible idea you had. How in the world could you sleep with my slave girl?"

Now wait a minute. This was Sarah's idea, not Abraham's idea.

Abraham is pretty passive. He says, "Well, just do whatever you want with her." He doesn't solve the problem.

***Sarah treats Hagar harshly***

You know what Sarah wants to do with Hagar.

She wants to treat her so badly that Hagar feels terrible. She does.

You can imagine how Sarah is feeling. Her young slave girl has just slept with her husband and is going to have a baby.

Sarah begins to treat Hagar harshly.

The Hebrew word that is used here is the same word that is used much later when the Egyptians treat the Israelite slaves harshly.

### ***Hagar runs away***

Hagar decides that she can't stand it anymore. Even though she is pregnant, she is going to run away. She is going to become a runaway slave. Where is she going to go? She's from Egypt. She's probably going back there.

### **Connect with Hagar**

Can you relate to where Hagar is in this story?

### ***Transition***

Let me remind you where this story takes place...

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## **Hagar in the Wilderness**

### **Geography of the Wilderness**



What you see here is satellite imagery of the Holy Land and Egypt. The location marked on the map with a red pin is the region of Hebron. This is where Hagar lives with Sarah and Abraham. You can see that it is more arid than the area to the west and north and on the edge of a desert like area – the wilderness.

The road back home for the runaway slave, Hagar is through the Sinai wilderness.



## Sinai Wilderness



This is a picture of the Sinai wilderness between the Holy Land and Egypt. Hagar has a trip of 200 miles ahead of her in this place.. Imagine the 18 year old Hagar, starting her journey in this place. She is pregnant and alone in the desert.

## Hagar's Wilderness Experience

She finds herself at a spring of water in the desert.  
There will be another oasis somewhere. She may not know where.  
How far is it? Where is it? Can she make it there? Can she survive?

She feels in absolute despair.  
She has runaway and everything seems hopeless.  
Maybe even praying, "God why haven't you fixed this? Why have you allowed me to conceive a child? My mistress is treating me terribly and my master is doing nothing to help. Where are you, God?"

She is in the wilderness.

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## Meeting with God's Messenger

Listen to how the story continues in Genesis 16:7-10

The Lord's messenger found Hagar at a spring in the desert, the spring on the road to Shur, and said, "Hagar! Sarai's servant! Where did you come from and where are you going?"

She said, "From Sarai my mistress. I'm running away."

The Lord's messenger said to her, "Go back to your mistress. Put up with her harsh treatment of you." The Lord's messenger also said to her,

"I will give you many children, so many they can't be counted!"

### **The Lord's Messenger finds Hagar**

This is powerful. There are a couple things I want you to notice about this scripture.

The Lord's messenger finds Hagar in the wilderness.

Of course, God knows where she is all the time.

### ***God is looking for us***

Yet this is a way of saying that God is constantly looking for us in our wilderness.

When we feel like running away, God is searching for us.

God is searching for the strays.

You remember that Jesus goes searching for the lost.

This is exactly what happens here.

### **The Lord's Message for Hagar**

Notice that what the angel says to Hagar is not what she wanted to hear.

What she wanted to hear was that the angel was going to go make everything okay back at home – turn Sarah's heart to love and accept her and change Abraham's heart to be helpful.

But, the angel doesn't promise that.

### ***God walks with us***

This is what we find in our own lives. When we are in the middle of the wilderness and feel like giving up, we want God to fix everything and make it all okay. It just doesn't work that way most of the time.

God doesn't fix everything.

God promises to walk with us through the wilderness.

God doesn't promise to fix everything but he does say that you have to go back. You can't run away from this – you have to go back. Hagar found that she could go back for two reasons:

God found her and saw her in her wilderness.

God doesn't promise to fix everything, but God says, "I am with you."

It will turn out okay. The child in your womb will create a great nation.

The future will look better than the present.

With this knowledge, Hagar prepares to go home.

### ***Transition***

Before she heads home, she does something unusual. She names God.

### **Hagar names God**

People don't generally name God in the Old Testament.

God shares the divine name to people.

Here a slave-girl, a foreigner, an outcast gives God a name.

This is the first time in all the Bible that someone gives God a name.

Listen to what happen Genesis 16:13.

Hagar named the Lord who spoke to her, "You are El Roi" because she said,  
"Can I still see after he saw me?"

### ***El Roi - You are the God who sees***

So what does that mean?

El is the generic name for God in the ancient near east.

Elohim is the actual word and El is the shortened version. El, Elohim or God.

Roi means to see.

She calls God, the God who sees.

I was here in the wilderness, lost and alone, and you saw me. From this time forward I will call you the God who sees.

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## **Conclusion**

Whatever the wilderness is that you are walking through, God is the God who sees you.

When you feel rejected and pushed out – God sees you.

When you feel invisible – God sees you.

When you wish that God would just fix all your problems – God sees you.

## **Good News**

The good news is that God sees you. God walks with you and promises a future with hope. You don't have to be afraid in the wilderness.

## **Call to Action**

### ***Our Wilderness***

When you are walking through the wilderness trust and hold on to that promise.

You might say, "God, I'm counting on you. I don't see you right now, but I am counting the fact that you see me and walk with me."

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### ***The Wilderness of Others***

When you see someone else in the wilderness, God might be inviting you to be God's messenger. God's messengers, angels, in the Bible don't have wings. They look like people. They look like you.

Most people ignore others that are in need.

You have the opportunity to be God's messenger to someone this week.

### **Invitation**

Remember, (cover face with hands; in same gesture as in opening story)

God sees you.

God walks with you.

We can be God's messengers.

This is the message from the wilderness from the story of Hagar.

### **Closing Prayer**

[Text here]

Amen.