

At first you may think that you don't have much in common with Hagar. One, you probably are not Egyptian. Two, you have probably never been a slave, no matter how sucky your job is. But if you've ever been in a place of suffering and felt all alone, that no one else could identify with your situation, that when you try to tell someone about it their eyes glaze over because they don't get it, that you feel like even God has abandoned you because your prayers for help go unanswered and you seem to be invisible to the invisible God. Well, then you need to hear Hagar's story. You need to see how she was transformed by the presence of a God that sees her suffering and hears her cries for help. You need to listen to how she was moved from a place of loneliness to producing a multitude.

We read about her mistreatment in Genesis 16 and we can see when she becomes visible she was treated like a piece of property that can be used to get what Sarai wanted, a child.

GENESIS 16:1-14

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "The Lord has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. 3 So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.) 4 So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she's pregnant she treats me with contempt. The Lord will show who's wrong—you or me!" 6 Abram replied, "Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit." Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.

The mistreatment, the outright abuse, happened when Sarai and Abram took matters into their own hands to provide a child for themselves. A connecting point is in the promise that God gave to Abram in [Genesis 12:3](#), [I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.](#) Is God going to curse Hagar for treating Sarai with contempt?

7 The angel of the Lord found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. 8 The angel said to her, “Hagar, Sarai’s servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

“I’m running away from my mistress, Sarai,” she replied.

9 The angel of the Lord said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority.” Now, if you’re like me you’re thinking, “Well that’s a horrible idea! Why on earth, no HOW in the world could God send her back?” Perhaps this is God cursing Hagar for treating Sarai with contempt. **10 Then he added, “I will give you more descendants than you can count.”** God is going to bless Hagar instead of cursing her. God sent her back because God will not allow her life to be defined by abuse or that she is a foreigner. Her life will be fruitful and she will multiply. Also, just because I needed to figure this out too, when she returns the abuse stops and she is a part of the family. Yes, there is a separation between the two families that will happen, but even that God is overseeing.

11 And the angel also said, “You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means ‘God hears’), for the Lord has heard your cry of distress.

12 This son of yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives.” Well, that doesn’t seem very pleasant. But, somehow it brings comfort to Hagar.

13 Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the Lord, who had spoken to her. She said, “You are the God who sees me.” She also said, “Have I truly seen the One who sees me?” 14 So that well was named Beer-lahai-roi (which means “well of the Living One who sees me”). It can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.

Through the pain of her life she comes to know a God that hears her cries of distress and sees her troubles. Meeting this God who hears and sees her brings her great comfort in the midst of her pain. She was redefined by experiencing the God who sees.

God sees your loneliness, sadness, and hurt. He hears your thoughts of hopelessness, of anxiety, and of longing for death. What God does is He gives Himself, His life transforming presence. He came to experience all that you go through in Jesus. And, it is in Jesus that we have full access to the presence of the God who sees and hears you. So, I offer you the prayer that the Apostle Paul prayed for his churches in the area of Ephesus. That you may experience the Life of God through Jesus. That you can make a home for Jesus in your heart and continually grow in the presence of the God who sees and hears you.

EPHESIANS 3:16-19

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Amen.