

I. WE

- A. Future has always been unpredictable... but it seems more unpredictable than ever.
 - 1. Examples... school, government, vacations
 - 2. Life/world/circumstances changing so quickly
 - 3. Out of control
- B. All going through this in our own ways... isolating.
 - 1. Everyone is just trying to survive... don't have time energy to see us, hear us...
 - 2. Trying our best to steer them but really have no control.
 - 3. Stuck in this isolated craziness.
 - 4. And who knows when we'll run out of track?
 - 5. **It can be terrifying to face an unknown future alone.**
 - a. Job loss, break ups, death, school changes, etc.
- C. Doesn't have to be that way.
 - 1. Can have Confidence in the unknown
 - 2. **Confidence in the unknown comes from trusting that we are known.**

II. GOD (Gen 16)

- A. Abram/Abraham- **father of 3 faiths**... 2000 BC
 - 1. God called him to trust him and go to a place he'd show him later.
 - 2. Would bless him and make him the father of a great nation... begin His rescue plan
 - 3. Believed, went, drama, hand to hand combat... over 10 years later... no kids.
- B. Wife Sarai gets an idea... a horrible idea.
- C. **Paraphrase Hagar backstory, Genesis 16**
- D. Put yourself in Hagar's place...
 - 1. Egyptian slave, no control over her life/future, even over what happened to her body.
 - 2. Nobody asked her opinion... no voice... treated as property.
 - 3. Hopefully this offends you.
 - 4. Didn't in the Ancient world... descriptive not prescriptive
 - 5. You know what changed this thinking? Jesus' and Church's treatment and view of women.
 - 6. Why because **Jesus showed us that God cares for every individual no matter their race, gender, or class.**
- E. They go through with this terrible plan
 - 1. Hagar gets pregnant and starts holding it over Sarai's head.
 - 2. Sarai's having none of it...
- F. **V. 5-6a** *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!" Abram replied, "Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit."*
 - 1. Notice we haven't heard a word from Hagar yet... she has no voice, choice... everything that is happening to her is forced on her...
 - 2. Unfair to say the least... lacking the most basic of human rights.

3. No one in her life SAW her... heard her... she is completely alone and has absolutely no control over her future.
 4. Just like 2020, things get worse...
- G. **V. 6b** *Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away*
1. It's not like she had a women's shelter/family/hospital to go to...
 2. She's in the ancient middle east, no husband/caretaker, pregnant, completely alone, no status, no money, completely unknown, no connections.
 3. Chances are she is going to die out there. And no one will know or remember her.
 4. No one in her life cared whether she lived or died.
 5. ALONE and facing an entirely unknown future.
 6. But someone did care...
- H. **V. 7-8** *The angel of the Lord* (quick talk of angels... believe or not(Jesus)... still shows God's character) *found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. 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.*
1. Theophany? Angel of the Lord often speaks as God in the first person.
 2. **God's love and care is often most clearly seen when we are a lone and facing the unknown.**
 3. God is always showing us his love and care... but we are usually more willing to see it, search for answers when we feel alone and facing the unknown.
- I. **V. 9** *The angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority."*
1. What?! Are you kidding me? Why not take her somewhere else? Or do something miraculous for her? How's this love and care?
 2. Possibly b/c... If she goes back... has protection of Abraham and people, more likely to survive, everyone will know that the child is Abraham's and has a right to his care and resources.
 3. **Trust often requires us to take a difficult step that doesn't make sense.**
 4. But when the unknown future becomes our visible reality we see God's care has always been with us.
- J. **V. 10** *Then he added, "I will give you more descendants than you can count."*
1. "I will give" speaking as God.
 2. "Don't worry he will survive and he will be great and you will no longer be an unknown slave girl you will be a revered matriarch of an entire people group."
- K. **V. 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.*
1. Try to put yourself in her emotions again...
 2. No one had ever asked her opinion let alone listened to her... she was simply property to do with what they wanted and throw away when it became inconvenient to have her around.
 3. And now, the God that created **bil lions of stars** tells her that she has his undivided attention... he has heard her. Name your son after this fact!
 4. **The future is unknown, but we are completely known by the God who controls the future.**
 5. When he asks us to trust him in the unknown it's not just b/c he knows what's best... it's b/c he knows us and wants to give us what's best.
- L. Angel then tells her about Ishmael's future.. going to be a fighter... (might even be a little pay back to her masters)... tradition is that Arabs are descended from Ishmael... proud, brave, fierce warriors, great civilizations

M. V. 13 *Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the Lord (YHWH), 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?"*

1. "I have seen the one who sees me" (another hint that the angel of the lord is not just an ordinary angel).
2. "The God who sees me."
3. From the very beginning God has been personal... not a distant force or uninterested deity.
4. **When we trust that God sees us we have confidence facing a future we can't see.**
5. Choice to make- Trust is a choice- Faith.
6. I just can't believe... you choose not to.
7. Ask Jesus to help you make that choice.

N. V. 15 *So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael.*

1. How did he know to name him that?
2. Hagar told him and he listened.
3. She now has a voice!
4. God gave her confidence when she faced an unknown future and she trusted and did what god had asked her to do.

O. And he kept his promise to her.

1. Rest of story (Genesis 21)
2. Baby born raised in Abraham's household.
3. Isaac is born -- Hagar & Ishmael forced to leave again... about to die again... angel comes and shows her water.
4. Boy grows and becomes strong...
5. Becomes patriarch to tribes...
6. God kept his promises.

III. YOU

- A. No matter what it might seem like right now...
1. Whether you feel emotionally, mentally alone
 2. Or whether you are actually physically alone

B. You are not alone. You are seen. You are heard. You are known.

C. Even if you wonder if God exists... even if you feel you don't really know anything about him... he's listening.

1. He's so near that you only have to whisper to him in your heart and he hears you.
2. He is ready to give you peace and confidence the moment you are ready.
3. What would it be like to be known by this kind of God?

4. How would your life be different if you KNEW that God KNEW you?

5. That's what Jesus offered.

6. Luke 12:6-7 *"What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows."*

D. JF- Why are you worried? This **IS** what you have.

1. He's not just next to you... his spirit is living inside you.
2. This is a hard time... but there's been worse...
3. And as empires crumbled around them and they faced certain death... JF's for the last 2000 years have had peace and confidence in the unknown b/c they chose to trust a God who knew them.
4. And they changed the world... When you don't fear death you don't fear much.

5. If God truly knows you... what is there to keep you from confidently walking into the unknown?

6. **When you know that you are known you have confidence in the unknown**

E. Invitation: Read **Luke 12:22-34** once a day for a week.

IV. WE

A. What if you didn't have to fear the unknown... even the unknown of death?

B. What if you knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that every concern, worry, need, stressor was known to God and he cared?

C. How would your life change? How would your family change?

D. Fear of the unknown is erased by the confidence of being known.

Questions

1. What is something about our unknown future that seems to keep causing you worry, stress, and/or uncertainty?

2. Get a jump start on this week's reading challenge and read Luke 12:22-34. What here most cultivates peace for you?

3. What would be different for you if you KNEW, in every moment, that God saw you, heard you, and knew you? How can your group pray for you in this?