



WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE

October 23, 2022

Week 3 El Roi - The God Who Sees

Welcome to our Discussion Guide - designed to help you think more deeply about the sermon topic as you engage with others through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and real-life application.

➤ KEY PASSAGES

Genesis 16:1-16, Psalm 33:18, Jeremiah 16:17, 1 Peter 3:2,

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

If you could be invisible for 1 day, where would you go? What would you want to see?

➤ QUICK REVIEW

This week we focus on God as the one who sees. It is comforting to know that no matter what we are facing, God sees us and is available to guide us if we will put our trust in him.

➤ EXPLORATION

The story in Genesis of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar reveals another name of God; the God who Sees. In all the twists and turns of this story we will see that God is faithful even when we get impatient and make unwise decisions. Our God not only sees us, but also provides a way for us to move forward.

In this story we learn that God has promised that Abraham would have many descendants and God would

bleed Abraham's family throughout the generations to come. The problem was, Abraham didn't have any children. He and his wife Sarah were in their 80's when they received this promise and as you can imagine, it was very hard to comprehend how God would fulfill that promise. But 10 years later, there was still no child, so they decided to take matters into their own hands.

Read the following passage aloud to see how this all played out:

Genesis 16:1-2

The very idea of this may seem shocking to our current cultural understanding of marriage, and rightly so. However, in the days of Abraham and Sarah, it was not uncommon for a man to have multiple wives. It was culturally acceptable, and yet even then it was a relationally and emotionally destructive practice.

Have you ever longed for something, and truly believed it would be good for you, but you had to wait for it? How did you handle the waiting?

Wanting to see the promise of God fulfilled was a good thing for Abraham and Sarah, but instead of waiting patiently, they decided to take matters into their own hands.

Genesis 16:3-4

If you have ever wanted something desperately, and prayed for it and didn't see any progress, then you may have some compassion for Abraham and Sarah. Their whole married life they wanted children and didn't have any, then they get a direct promise from God that they

will in fact have a child. But 10 years later, when they are well past normal childbearing years, there is still no baby. Imagine the pain, disappointment and desperation they must have felt.

Instead of waiting for God to bring what he had clearly promised, Sarah decides she will build a family through her servant Hagar. As you might imagine, Hagar has no choice and is thrown into this arrangement and begins to despise Sarah.

When we are around people who take matters into their own hands, people get hurt...When God says wait but we are unwilling, things don't usually go well...whether Christian or not there are consequences.

Share about a time when you felt mistreated and how you handled it.

You may have noticed that in the verses we have read so far, there is little mention of God. Rather than seeking what God wanted for them, Sarah and Abraham did things their own way and caused a great deal of harm to Hagar in the process. In her despair, Hagar ran away and ended up in a desperate situation.

Genesis 16:7-9

Can you imagine having a conversation with the "angel of the Lord?" This is the first time we read about an angel meeting with a person in the Old Testament and that person was a single mom, a runaway, and someone who is being mistreated.

Imagine yourself in this scene, what might you be feeling and thinking?

If you have ever asked yourself, "who am I that God would notice me?" Hagar has something to teach you. God sees you! God knows what you are going through! God has a way forward for you.

Think about a time when you have felt unseen. How would it have changed you to know that God was with you?

In the next few verses we see what the angel of the Lord told Hagar to do. Before you read it, keep in mind that God was asking her to do something very difficult, but he was also promising to be with her every step of the way.

Genesis 16:9-10

This was a very specific situation in which God directed Hagar to go back and submit to Sarah. We need to be careful not to apply this to other situations that God may not be directing. God provided for Hagar and her son in very specific ways. He did not allow her to die in the wilderness but instead he gave her a future.

Genesis 16:13

It is Hagar who identifies God as "El Roi - the God who sees me."

- **Psalm 33:18**
- **Jeremiah 16:17**
- **1 Peter 3:2**

Take a minute to think back about your life and your choices this past week. How do you feel knowing that God saw everything you did? How might it change the way you live this coming week?

Genesis 16:15

Hagar chose to trust God and do as he directed. She went back and God kept his promise to her and to her son.

What does the name "El-Roi" teach us about God?

- PROMISE - God honors his promises
 - **Genesis 28:15**
- PRESENCE - He will always be with us
 - **John 15:5**
- PROVISION - He will provide what we need
 - **1 Chronicles 16:11**
 - **2 Thessalonians 3:5**
- PERSPECTIVE- He will show us the way
 - **2 Corinthians 5:7**

➤ TAKE AWAY

Throughout this sermon series we have learned about God through many of his names:

- Elohim: God Our Creator
- Jehovah: The God Who Is
- Jehovah-Jireh: God Our Provider
- Jehovah Raah: God My Shepherd
- Jehovah Rapha: God Our Healer
- Father: God Our Father
- El-Roi: The God Who Sees Me

Pastor Aaron shared about two respected biblical scholars who had powerful but opposing thoughts when it came to where we as Christians need to focus. The first is from A.W. Tozer:

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

C.S. Lewis disagreed and wrote:

“How God thinks of us is not only more important, but infinitely more important. Indeed, how we think of Him is of no importance except in so far as it is related to how He thinks of us.”

It is so amazing to know that this incredible God we have learned about not only sees us, but he also loves us. He creates a way forward for us when we make good decisions to follow him and when we take matters into our own hands.

The most important thing for us to take away from this series is that God is good and wants to be in a relationship with us.

Take some time to share which name or character trait of God you value the most.

What have you learned from this series that you will take into the coming week?

