

February 4

Genesis 16:13-14 (AMP) ¹³ Then [Hagar] called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “You are God Who Sees”; for she said, “Have I not even here [in the wilderness] remained alive after seeing Him [who sees me with understanding and compassion]?”

I have mentioned many times about my being asked to leave OSU because of my grades. Up to this point, I had always done well in school. It was the place where I made friends, learned new ideas, and excelled. It was through school that I would achieve my dreams and make a life for myself. Suddenly, I was removed from that “academic” world. My close friends continued their studies while I stayed behind. They were involved with school activities. I was involved with my job cleaning up trash, hoeing weeds, and planting grass. I found myself in a world that I had never given much thought. For over a year, the world seemed to move forward while I was stuck in a routine that held no promise for me. I was no longer a student working to become a teacher; instead, I was a “long-hair” who was given the jobs no one else wanted.

A couple of days ago, we looked at our meeting Jesus “outside the camp.” This concept is far more difficult than we could imagine because, for the world, life itself happens outside the world of Jesus. It is difficult to be separated from what appears to be fun, excitement, fulfillment, and desires. That year out of school was my year “outside the camp.” Even though I was not walking with the Lord, He was there. During that year, I learned that my dream of becoming a teacher would require more than I had been willing to give. Yes, I had the academic ability to achieve that goal, but I lacked the character, the work ethic, and the willingness to sacrifice. I discovered how satisfying it can be to work with your hands. I learned humility by being the only “long-hair” on a crew of rednecks. I also learned that I could find friends that did not look or think like me. When we follow Jesus “outside the camp,” we will find ourselves because we will find Jesus. What truly changed my life was understanding my weaknesses, my faults, and my ability. The world cannot offer this wisdom to us. Jesus can if we follow Him outside the lures, temptations, and the changing morals of this world because Jesus is with us even in the wilderness.