

**“The God Who Sees Me”**

I am sensitive to the fact

That for some Mother's Day is not easy.

Some didn't have good mothers.

And their memories are not altogether positive.

Others have recently had mothers pass away

And Mother's Day reminds them of their loss.

And still others never had a chance to become a mother.

For various reasons, Mother's Day is not a day

Some look forward to . . . and I get that!

But let me say this . . . we were all children of mothers!

And one of the traits of a child

Is the desire to be noticed!

You ever notice that?

*“Hey, Dad, watch me!*

*Watch me, Mom.”*

Over and over, and over again.

And the attentive Mom or Dad stop what there're doing

And watch their children, over and over and over again.

The flip side of that coin is mothers often feel invisible.

If you are a stay-at-home mother

Much of your day is spent alone

Much of your work goes unnoticed.

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And when your family does comes home  
Even then they don't see you.

Hilary Price, from the People's Church Toronto  
Describes it this way:

*It all began to make sense—the blank stares, the lack of response, the way one of the kids will walk into the room while I am on the phone and ask to be taken to the store. And inside I'm thinking, Can't you see? I am on the phone. Obviously not. No one can see if I'm on the phone or cooking, or sweeping the floor or even standing on my head in the corner because no one can see me at all. I am invisible.*

~~

Many mothers feel nobody sees them  
Nobody understands them  
Nobody cares . . . .

Hagar, in our story today, felt much the same . . .  
Confused, misused, and abused.

The story of Hagar is not your typical Mother's Day story.

She is not a heroine like Deborah.  
But she, too, is a mother in the Bible.  
She is a maidservant to Sarai, a slave from Egypt.

Her life is not her own!

She didn't choose to be Sarai's personal slave.

She didn't choose to live her life  
Shackled to the demands of her owners.

Nor did she choose to bear a child

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For Abram and Sarai's barren relationship.

All of this forced upon her by the society she lived in.

Much like so many black slaves by their white owners  
In our own shameful history.

It's no wonder then when she was found pregnant  
That she felt hostility toward her master.

But all that did was to make matters worse.

And so she did what slaves do . . . she ran away.

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It's the same with the “Wives of Boko Haram.”

Abducted from their homes  
Forced to become slave/wives to terrorists.

They, too, if given a chance flee.  
It's not easy to be a mother in those conditions.

The conversation between God and Hagar  
Is the longest recorded conversation  
Between God and a woman in the OT.

Hagar is also the only woman in the Bible who names God.

She names God, *El Roi*, in Hebrew, meaning  
“the God who sees me.”

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Here Hagar flees from an untenable situation  
And runs smack-dab into God.

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As Hilary Price writes

*Hagar doesn't know what she wants. She knows what she doesn't want. She doesn't want to be treated as a nonperson, as an invisible person. She doesn't realize what her greatest need is until she meets the God who meets that need. And she names him, El Roi, the God who sees me.*

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The Bible lists several names for God.

Eloim—the Creator God

Yahweh—the Covenant-maker God

El Shaddai—the Almighty God.

But truth be known

These names carry little meaning to someone

Who has never experienced the presence of God.

The names are too far removed from present circumstances

To be relevant or significant.

But how about—El Roi—the God who sees me?

What effect might El Roi have on someone like Hagar?

What effect might El Roi have on an enslaved pregnant girl

Who flees into the night to escape from Boko Haram?

All alone in the wilderness . . .

How would it be if God meets her there?

What effect would it have

If God met her at her point of need

Like God did for Hagar?

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It would make all the difference in the world.

It would give her the courage to carry on  
 Knowing God was seeing her through it.

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There's something so important about the need to be seen.

William Tammeus said, *You don't really understand human nature unless you know why a child on a merry-go-round will wave at his parents every time around—and why his parents will always wave back.*

Zherina is in gymnastics  
 And after every single routine  
 She always looks our way for recognition.

And if I don't have my face in the phone  
 I always give her the thumbs up!  
 To be noticed is so vital . . .  
 It creates a sense of belonging  
 A sense of love and acceptance  
 A sense of value.

And how much more significant then  
 When it is God noticing you.

**Psalm 139 (CEV) You have looked deep into my heart, Lord, and you know all about me. <sup>2</sup>You know when I am resting or when I am working, and from heaven you discover my thoughts. <sup>3</sup>You notice everything I do and everywhere I go.**

**Psalm 139:15-16 (CEV) <sup>15</sup>Nothing about me is hidden from you! I was secretly woven together deep in the**

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**earth below, <sup>16</sup> but with your own eyes you saw my body being formed. Even before I was born, you had written in your book everything I would do.**

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Hagar, the immigrant from Africa  
 An Egyptian slave to Jewish masters  
 Had no value . . .

Except for what tasks she performed for her masters  
 A slave to do their bidding . . .

Go collect firewood  
 Go fetch water  
     Cook the meal  
         Wash the clothes  
 Be there for your master in the middle of the night.

Could anyone feel less insignificant  
 Than what Hagar experienced  
 As a slave/wife to Abraham and Sarah?

And yet in her darkest most fearful hour  
 The God of all Creation comforts her  
 And everything changes . . .

She IS significant  
 She IS valued  
     She BELONGS to God.

~~

And so mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers

What difference will it make to know  
 That God sees and is present with you?

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What difference might it make to each of us  
 As we leave this place today to go our separate ways?

What difference will it make the day you might be  
 Laying in that hospital bed with nobody around you  
 As you breathe your last breath

What difference does it make  
 That your God,  
     Eloim,  
             El Shaddai,  
                     El Roi is there?

It makes all the difference in the world.

Hagar longed to be loved and valued  
 No one around her would satisfy that need . . .  
 God did.

~~

Let's make sure that doesn't happen to our loved ones.

When your children demand your attention  
*Look at me, Dad! Look at me, Mom!*

Look at them . . .  
 Even if it is a hundred times a day.

Look at them because they need to know  
 There are loved and cared for.

Let them know they are of value and deeply loved.

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One of things that I have learned  
 In reading about some of the mothers

## **“The God Who Sees Me”**

Whose girls were abducted by Boko Haram

Is the comfort they have in knowing two things:

First of all, knowing that God in Christ

Is there with their girls watching over them.

Knowing that if, ultimately, their lives are taken

They would not be forsaken

But to go and be with the Lord.

And secondly, these mothers are given comfort

Knowing there are people throughout the world

Praying specifically for their children.

God knows them . . .

God sees them . . .

God loves them.

We know them

We pray for them

We love them!

May El Roi, the God who sees you, and you, and me

Be with us now and in our time of need.