

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome everyone! Thanks for joining us today or any other day of the week, at your convenience. This is the Buckminster Road Baptist Church's Sunday worship service, which we are recording it from home due to lockdown. I am pastor Claudio and I am here with my family to lead you in a time of prayer, worship and reflection on the word of God. God knows us and what are going through and He perceives our thoughts from afar. Our God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. King David expressed this very well when he wrote **Psalm 139**, which I would like us to read together, preparing our hearts to praise and worship Him. **1 You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. 5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. 7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. 11 If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. 13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand – when I awake, I am still with you. If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! 20 They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. 21 Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? 22 I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. 23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.**

Let's Pray

Our Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you for your presence. You are always present and you see us. You know everything about us. There is nothing hidden from you and we can't run away from your love. Your love is unconditional and everlasting, it never ends. Today, we choose to put our trust in you and believe you are in control and that you are working everything for good. You would please search our hearts as we bring and submit ourselves, worries and anxieties before you and lead us to the way of righteousness. Please forgive our sins and let your Holy Spirit fill our hearts with praise, worship and thanksgiving. You have been faithful in protecting and providing for all our needs. Please bless this service and all who are participating with us with your presence and your anointing. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen

Song 1 – At the Cross

<https://youtu.be/AkRudaBidHc> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

*Oh Lord you've searched me, You know my way
Even when I fail you I know you love me*

*Your holy presence surrounding me
In every season, I know you love me, I know you love me*

***At the cross I bow my knee,
Where your blood was shed for me
There is no greater love than this
You have overcome the grave
Your glory fills the highest place
What can separate me now?***

*You go before me, You shield my way
Your Hand upholds me and I know you love me*

*You tore the veil, You made a way
When you said that it is done*

*And when the earth fades, falls from my eyes
And you stand before me I know you love me
Oh I know you love me*

Song 2 – Great is Thy Faithfulness

<https://youtu.be/liQzzc41z5Q> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be*

***Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me***

*Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love
Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside*

Intercessory Prayer

By Mary Marriott

Our loving heavenly Father we bring our prayers to you this morning asking for your blessing and presence with us as our country struggles through a critical time in this pandemic. We pray for all medical staff that you give them the strength and courage to carry on Lord and we thank you for the lives being saved. But we also remember all those who have lost loved ones and we pray that they may find comfort and peace. We pray Lord for all the other countries of our world where they are in the grip of Covid. We pray that they may receive the vaccine and help they need. We also pray for all those involved in our vaccination programme and for all those who are in care homes, which are struggling again. We remember those members of our own fellowship, Rosemary Wicker, Alison Toach and Ron Voce. All in local homes and any other know to us personally and those of our numbers who are shielding again. We pray that you will be with them all. Help us all to play our part Lord by obeying the rules and helping one another in any small way we are able. And we pray Lord for all who are caught up in the floods, many not for the first time and we ask that they may receive the help and comfort they will need. And Lord, we ask your blessing on the people of America. Grant that their new President may lead the nation wisely and bring the people together again in unity. Lord we bring all these prayers in your precious name and we ask you to be with us and grant us your blessing. Amen

Preaching and Teaching

El Roi - The God Who Sees by Andrea Moises

Introduction

I don't know about you but for me visual images and pictures are very important. Every time I go out for a walk I like to look and admire the beauty around me. Because of that I often get distracted and get behind, especially if I'm walking with Claudio, whose steps are double the size of mine. It gets worse if I have my phone on me because I have the tendency (more like a habit) of getting my camera to register the beautiful images. In contrast with my simple observation of trees, birds, lakes and elements of nature, God sees beyond and he's always interested in looking after us. He sees us in our distress, He sees our hearts and He sees our needs. Today I'll be sharing about three different bible passages where God's eyes were looking at specific people with specific needs. Let's begin by reading a passage where his eyes were on a desert land and when he found a peculiar woman, who was running away. Let us read together **Genesis 16: 1-15**
1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, 'The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.'
Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, 'You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me.'
6 'Your slave is in your hands,' Abram said. 'Do with her whatever you think best.'
Then Sarai ill-treated Hagar; so she fled from her. 7 The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside

the road to Shur. 8 And he said, 'Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?' 'I'm running away from my mistress Sarai,' she answered. 9 Then the angel of the Lord told her, 'Go back to your mistress and submit to her.' 10 The angel added, 'I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.' 11 The angel of the Lord also said to her: 'You are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery. 12 He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility towards all his brothers.' 13 She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: 'You are the God who sees me,' for she said, 'I have now seen[c] the One who sees me.' 14 That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi;[d] it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered. 15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael."

I – God Sees Your Despair

There, in a desert site, Hagar, an Egyptian slave was running away from Sarai, her mistress. For her surprise she was found by an angel who had a message of hope for her and the child who was in her womb. God didn't only come down to the desert to look for her but he also called her by name. Verses 7 and 8 say: **"The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. And he said, 'Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?' 'I'm running away from my mistress Sarai,' she answered."** We can notice here that she answered his first question but not the second one. Why? It was probably because she was so hopeless that she had no idea of where she was going. She had no hope for the future. Maybe she was in so much despair that she had even suicidal thoughts. Hagar wasn't someone from Abram's family so in other words, she wasn't part of God's chosen people but still God cared for her. She was only a foreigner and a slave, yet God cared for her. She had no one to run to, no friends and no relatives to look after her in that delicate moment of her life. But God, the God who sees everything was there in the desert with her. And that's when; right there at the desert, Hagar named God: "Beer Lahai Roi", the God who sees me". It's so encouraging to know that God, the owner of the universe, the all powerful and all knowing, comes after us and finds us in the middle of our despair. He sees us as we are and comes to meet us with His loving and comforting presence. There are days and moments in our lives that we can identify with Hagar. If that's your situation right now I have good news for you; God sees you and He wants to lift you up, He wants to give you hope. You are not alone. Beer Lahai sees you! If you're not going through a desert time right now, then it's time to be God's eyes and see others who can be blessed by you. A simple phone call or a text message saying "Hello, how are you today?" can make a big difference in someone's life. Let's be messengers of hope and not criticism. Let's be an encouragement to each other!

II– God Sees Your Heart

The Bible is full of examples and stories of how God's eyes are always interested in us, no matter the circumstance. Let's see what happened in a particular event in a life of a man who was not particularly in the best shape with God. **Luke 19: 1-10 1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he**

ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. 5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.' 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.' 8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount. 9 Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.' What do we know about Zacchaeus? What did Jesus do? What can we learn with this story? The Jewish people had to pay taxes to the Roman Empire and this man was in charge of that, even though he was a Jew himself. He worked under a corrupt political system and must have fit in well because he made himself wealthy from it. How? It was by cheating his fellow citizens, taking advantage of their powerlessness. Nevertheless, there he was, climbing on a tree, to see Jesus. He didn't care of what people would think of him when climbing on a tree like a monkey, to satisfy his curiosity to see the man who had been healing many, not only from their physical diseases but also quenching their thirsty souls. Zacchaeus also was thirsty. He also needed to be redeemed from his sins. Jesus saw him, despite the crowd and other distractions in the way. Jesus didn't only see him, but called him by his name. In verse 5 we read: **"Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."** It seems to me that Jesus took an X-ray of Zacchaeus's heart at the moment he saw him up on that fig tree. And what was the corrupt tax collector's, or shall we say 'cheater's' response? Did he try to hide? Did he pretend he didn't hear Jesus? No, absolutely not. He came down at once and welcomed him gladly. However the crowd was not happy about that personal spontaneous arrangement. Why? It was because of their legalism and religiosity. Then they began to complain and grumble amongst themselves, not happy that Jesus was going to be the guest of a sinner. We can be easily tempted to judge people by our own standards or of what we may determine to be right. That's why we must be careful with any form of legalistic attitude in our lives. Only God is able to see what is in the heart. Only God knows our history, our background, our DNA, our personal struggles. Jesus knew Zacchaeus was already sick and tired of his sins. Verse 8 shows us very clearly that Zacchaeus was ready to emend his mistakes, when he said he was going to give half of what he had to the poor and pay back four times more to whoever he had deceived. We see in that man someone who is desperately thirsty for Jesus, for the truth. Are you thirsty for the living water that is Jesus? Are you ready to receive his forgiveness and embrace, like Zacchaeus? Jesus said in **John 7: 37 "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink."** Jesus knew Zacchaeus was thirsty and that's why I think he wanted to stay at his house. Jesus wanted to quench Zacchaeus' thirst. I lived in the Middle East for many years and there's no greater way to honour a friend than to visit them in their own house. Last year we went to visit our beloved friends in Kurdistan and out of the two weeks we stayed there we only stayed by ourselves one day. All the other days we were invited to be at someone else's house, visiting and eating with them, being blessed by their wonderful hospitality and presence. Jesus wants to come to your house, to your heart, to quench the thirst of your soul. Are you ready for that? Are you willing to welcome him in? He says in the book of **Revelation 3:20 "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."**

III – God Sees Your Needs

Let's look at another passage...

“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.” Mark 6:34

The first thing Jesus saw when he came ashore with his disciples was the crowd of people who gathered to see him. He must have been tired of all the travels and all the people that were coming and going to listen to him and to receive physical and spiritual healing. Instead of feeling exhausted or maybe annoyed, he felt compassion when he saw the crowd. Again he looked into their hearts and immediately felt compassion. Why? It was because they were like sheep without a shepherd. What a beautiful analogy Jesus makes here. He is the good shepherd. One of my favorite Psalms says: **“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.” Psalms 23:1-3** Jesus then began to teach many things and the text says that they stayed on and on until it got dark and they were all hungry. Then Jesus did more; not only did he feed their hungry souls, he fed their empty stomachs, meeting their physical needs too. The disciples wanted Jesus to send the crowd away, hungry, but his shepherd heart wouldn't allow it. He then performed a great miracle by multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish, which was enough to feed five thousand men, according to the account of Mark 6:35-44. Jesus' priority was caring for people spiritually as well as physically. God is a compassionate God who cares for the needs of people as a whole. He sees our emotional and spiritual needs as well as our physical needs. That's why we too cannot close our eyes to people who need our help. Are you aware of the needs of others? Do you see them? Do you have compassion when you see suffering around you? When you see people in need, without food, without clothes, without having their basic needs met? Are you willing to walk an extra mile and to give your time, your efforts and share your resources? On the other hand, are we willing to let God find us, to depend on Him to feed us? Do we trust Him as our good shepherd? He is a good God and is always ready to fulfill our needs.

Conclusion

God sees us in our despair. He finds us wherever we are and is ready to embrace us with our peculiar characteristics. Our race, position or status doesn't matter in the eyes of God. He loves us as we are! He is our hope and peace! God sees our heart. He knows we're not perfect. He calls us by name: Hagar, Zacchaeus, Andrea. He says: “Hey, I see you, I love you. I want to be your Lord and personal Saviour.” God sees the world we live in, He is aware of the hungry and the poor. He's full of grace and compassion. He is eager to satisfy our needs and to feed our hungry souls.

Responsive Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for being El Roi; the God who sees. Only you can see us as we truly are and only you are able to know what is in our hearts. Would you please draw us closer and closer to you, finding us in our darkest moments? Would you come and enter our lives, being our guest of honour. Would you come and meet us in our deepest needs like you did with Hagar, Zacchaeus and the multitude of people who kept pursuing Jesus as if He was the only thing that mattered to them. There is hunger and thirst in our soul that only you can satisfy so I ask you to come and feed us with your presence, with your joy, with your peace that surpasses all understanding, despite the circumstances we're

going through right now. Only you can fill our heart with your perfect love and amazing grace. Only you can forgive our sins and restore our soul. Only you can give us a new hope and a new perspective of life. Come Lord and take your place in our lives, changing us from inside out, transforming us according to your will, which is always good, pleasing and perfect. I ask you all these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

Song 3 – Reckless Love

<https://youtu.be/7GGJ8cyYNzQ> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

*Before I spoke a word, You were singing over me
You have been so, so good to me
Before I took a breath, You breathed Your life in me
You have been so, so kind to me*

***Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the 99
And I couldn't earn it, I don't deserve it, still You give yourself away
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God***

*When I was Your foe, still Your love fought for me
You have been so, so good to me
When I felt no worth, You paid it all for me
You have been so, so kind to me*

*There's no shadow You won't light up,
Mountain You won't climb up, coming after me
There's no wall You won't kick down
Lie You won't tear down, coming after me*

Final Words and Announcements

Our Zoom home group prayer meeting is every Wednesday at 7:30pm and I will be sending the link for you all to connect on the email. Contribution can be made direct to the church bank account as follows: A D L Memorial Buckminster – Sort Code: 09-01-51 and Account Number: 13749406

Let me finish our service by praying the Priestly Blessing - Numbers 6:23-24

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.”

See you all on Next Sunday!