

Weekly Health Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of January 19 & 20, 2019

Dear Friends and Family:

This week I have made some improvement but am still coughing. I take two or three breathing treatments a day, and gradually my cough is getting better. I have heard from so many people who have or had this same cough, and everyone has said it will take a long time to get rid of. I am on six weeks now and still counting. My shingles outbreak is over, just need to heal up some spots yet. I am still itching in some spots, but the pain has pretty much subsided. I am amazed how the Lord directs my life, the twists and turns I never in a million years would have guessed, and yet God guides and leads me in the direction He has set. He makes His presence felt in so many ways. But how like God? He places His hand on our shoulders, looks into our eyes, and lets us know He understands. “I see you,” He says. “I see what you are going through.”

That’s exactly what happened to a woman named Hagar. In Genesis, God had promised Abram he would be the father of many nations. But then his wife, Sarai, grew tired of waiting on God to fulfill His promise. So, she told Abram to sleep with her slave, Hagar, and build a family through her. (Genesis 16:1-3). Once Hagar conceived, Sarai grew jealous and mistreated Hagar. Hagar couldn’t take the abuse any longer, so she ran away to the desert.

“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. Then the angel of the LORD told her, ‘Go back to your mistress and submit to her.’ The angel added, ‘I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count’” (Genesis 16:7-10, NIV).

Hagar’s heart was humbly moved because God had seen her, taken notice of her, understood her. “‘You are the God who sees me,’ for she said, ‘I have now seen the One who sees me’” (Genesis 16:13b). Hagar called God by His name, **El Roi**, The God who sees me ... and you.

The book of Hebrews tells us we have a High Priest, Jesus, who understands what we’re going through. He “sympathizes” with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15). The word “sympathizes” comes from two Greek words, *syn* and *pathos*, meaning, “to suffer with.” We are not alone in our suffering. In our suffering there are some glorious moments, moments when God makes His presence known, if we keep our eyes open to see.

I don’t know what you’re going through today, but I do know this: God sees you. He knows what you’re going through, and you are not alone. Hold these words close to your heart. Pastor Jim