

He Sees Me
Week Four

Redefined

Several years ago in my Bible Fellowship class I was on the schedule to teach Easter Sunday. Teaching on Easter Sunday can be particularly intimidating because what could I possibly say that has not already been said. What could I possibly add to the Greatest Story Ever Told?

Days leading up to Easter I began to pray and ask the Lord to do a fresh work in my heart. I never want to get over my salvation but sometimes I forget. The liability of my own humanity crowds out the miracle of my salvation and I desperately need the Lord to rewrite His story on my heart from time to time. He took this opportunity to do just that.

The morning I was to teach I woke up early to pray. What happened next was not a vision or any type of transcendence. The Lord just knows how to speak to His daughter - the one with the overactive imagination.

The Lord allowed me to envision Easter morning from inside the tomb. I felt the darkness. I stood over to the side and leaned against the damp walls of Death.

Suddenly in my mind's eye the glorious light of the sun broke through as the stone rolled away from the door. Jesus stood facing the entrance (No! the exit). He was robed in glorious white - so beautiful. I watched as He made His way to the door when suddenly...He stopped.

Just before He ascended the tomb He turned and looked right at me.

I didn't even know He knew I was there.

He held out His hand for me. Jesus reached for me. He was not going to leave me there. In resurrection power He took me with Him! We ascended the grave together!

The Valley of Achor has a Door of Hope and His name is Jesus!

*Last week's lesson was particularly heavy. Our sin burden **is** heavy and too hard to bear. We were never meant to bear the load. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

Oh! What a Savior!

Reggie was so upset when he found me upset. "What's wrong?" (He should have bolted then. 😊)

I said, "It's my parents. How will they ever make it without me?"

Reggie waited about ten minutes and he called my dad. He told him what had transpired. My dad said, "Put her on the phone."

These are his words to me.

"Donna, What's wrong with you?" (I tried to explain but he wouldn't listen.) "Let me tell you one thing! We did just fine for thirty years before you ever came along and we will be just fine without you! Besides, I have already sawed off your end of the table and put your room up for rent!"

What a loving thing my dad did for me that day. He released me from my old identity so that I could embrace my new one.

What a loving thing my Father has done for me. He released me from my old identity so that I could embrace my new one.

Have you embraced your new identity?

Please turn to Psalm 45.

We are going to a wedding - *yours!*

I know this will probably not come as a big shock to you, but...I am a romantic. I tend to see life through the lens of a cinematic camera with some sappy romantic comedy music being played in the background. The plot is all about the build-up and the scenes that follow the climax *never* live up to the build-up. It is quite necessary to end the movie shortly after the climax because when the viewer experiences too much of what they have been waiting for (reality) they tend to leave the theatre disappointed because...*reality never lives up to the build-up.*

That is why *I am so hopelessly in love with Jesus.* His pursuit of me was the build-up and my life came to a dramatic climax the day He caught me. Reality is one sweet pursuit after another and every time I am found by Him my reality gets sweeter and sweeter. We really do have a *special effects* God.

If you are a fellow romantic you will have no trouble at all with today's lesson. If however you are skeptical of *all things sappy* I am praying that you will have joined the club by today's end. Let's begin.

We will first begin with our Groom. No bride is worthy of center-stage when the beautiful Jesus is near. He will allow you an entrance and *as radiant as you are* all eyes are still on Him.

Make no mistake, we should all bow at His entrance. We should all be on our faces as the most excellent King Jesus enters the room! He is the Ultimate One. All of heaven and earth were created *by this One, for this One, seized by this One.*

Yet, He graciously invites *you* to rise. He has written vows for this occasion. Listen to Him say...

I only have eyes for You. No one can ever take your place. Your place is beside Me and I am here to stay. I will adorn you all the days of your life with only the most precious things. You are so beautiful to me.

*Listen to me! The plan is for my love to **redefine** you. Forget what has come before Me, you were created for **this** moment. You were created for Me. You are so beautiful, I cannot take my eyes off of you.*

Honor me above all else because all else is beneath you. I will rule you with a perfect love, a love that does not shame.

Others will seek you out because of your relationship with me and I will bless others through you, My royal bride.

What is to come will replace what has been and my plans for your life will outlive you. And we will live happily ever after. - Psalm 45:9-17

What would you say to Him? Declare your love for Him to all those who have come to witness the occasion.

For now write verse 2 in your own words. (Come on now! This is Jesus!)

I would love to read what all of you have written.

(You will be encouraged to do this every day this week so that by week's end we will have a beautiful portrait of your groom.)

The wedding date is the day of your salvation. After the wedding you have a new identity.

We will revisit the description of our King on Day 5 after you have been given the opportunity to write your own vows based on Psalm 45:2-8.

Please SOAP Psalm 45:2-8 (and work on your vows).

Day Two - On His Arm (Original Design)

Woman was created *for* man.

How does that statement make you feel? (Such a psychoanalytical way to phrase a question - I do apologize. Please just humor me. I promise we are going somewhere with this.)

Donna, that is the most Neanderthal thing I have ever heard!

I know, right?

Okay, before you *accidentally* toss this week's study into the fireplace, will you please give me a few paragraphs to spin it with the Divine? (**Step away** from the paper-shredder! ☺)

How about this thought? *In all of creation, the only thing God declared as "not good" was the absence of you and me (woman).*

Whoa!

Read it again and let **this Truth** *redefine* you.

In all of creation, the only thing God declared as "not good" was the absence of you and me. (Genesis 2:18)

Something this important demands a slow methodical unfolding. (If you are doing today's study on the run, please put it down and return to it when you can pour over the Scriptures with me and grasp these concepts to their fullest.)

Please turn to Genesis 1:26-27. Write these verses below.

Who is *us*? The Godhead, the Trinity - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They were all present *here - In the beginning*. The NIV commentary states that this announcement was made to the members of His (God's) heavenly court.

Man can be used to speak of one man or mankind collectively - involving male and female. Here of course we know that the Lord was speaking of Adam *and* Eve. *"Let us make man in our own image...and let them rule. In the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."*

I had a professor who explained it this way: Man *and* woman embody the image of God - not so much separately but together. I am not speaking of a married couple here. I am speaking of the differences that make up men and women and how these differences *collectively* embody the image of God. (For example - Man's strength compared to a woman's tenderness. Man's ability to see the bigger picture compared to a woman's attention to detail. I am speaking in generalities of course.) The image of God is too big to be housed in either man *or* woman alone. *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created **them**.* (Gen. 1:27)

(Mounce's Expository Dictionary states - adam simply refers to man. God created the human race as male and female and calls them collectively adam. Although Adam was formed from the dust of the ground and Eve was made from one of Adam's ribs, they are both created in the image and likeness of God.)

Genesis chapter one is an overview of the creation process. In chapter 2 the writer highlights aspects already mentioned in chapter one so as to bring clarification and emphasis.

When God made Adam (man) - what was the process? (2:7)

I never noticed this before, but please look at Genesis 2:19. When God formed the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, what does the Bible say He used to form them?

When God made Eve, what did He use? Please write Genesis 2:21-22 in the space provided. (*Did you notice? He saved the best for last. I know - tacky and sexist. So sorry.*)

If God made man from the ground and if God made the animals from the ground...why did He not simply use the ground to form Eve?

I believe the answer may be found in Ephesians 5:28-29. The NASB puts it this way:

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church.

God's original design was for man to love woman (as he loves his own flesh). *God made woman to be loved and cherished by man.*

So, why did God make Eve? What was the reason again? First spoken in Genesis 2:18 and repeated in the latter part of Genesis 2:20.

In the Bible when things are repeated it is for emphasis

Do you think Eve was an afterthought? Eve **was not** an afterthought! Think about it. Do you believe (even for a minute) that the Master Designer stepped back, viewed creation and *then* decided...*oh we need to add a little something here*. No! He really did save the best for last but not in His creation of woman...in His creation of man and woman...*them*. It was not good for Adam to be alone. Adam was created for relationship.

She was made *for* man. Woman was made *to complete* man. On his own man was not complete. On his own he was lonely. On his own the creation process was not finished.

The delay between the creation of Adam and the creation of Eve holds great significance. Adam and Eve represent *the first relationship*. When God said "Let us make man in our own image" the creation of man (mankind) was *the creation of relationship* - something the Godhead shared from ages past. (I have heard so many commentators reduce Adam and Eve's relationship to procreation. Please!! That is an insult to the Creator! ☺) This was a *serious* moment in the creation process. There was groundwork that needed to be laid. There is a lot said in the way the Word of God handles *this moment*.

Please look at the words that lie between the beginning of 2:18 and the ending of 2:20. What do these words represent?

These words represent the work of Adam's hands. However, his work did not take care of his loneliness, did it? Now why do you suppose God would have included *that* little portion in this narrative? (More about that tomorrow.)

Please write verse 2:22 one more time and let your mind wander just a little with regard to the very first ever *Father of the Bride* scene.

The Father of the bride **would not** be cheated out of His daughter's grand entrance. He (God the Father) brought her to him (Adam). Whoa!

We have been making entrances ever since!

If you took my Ruth study you are probably *exhausted* with our wedding stories. Please allow me just a few more. ☺

In the months leading up to Haley's wedding she and her dad purposely did not speak of her "leaving." They both decided there were some things that were better left unsaid. They are both very pragmatic that way. Why go looking for trouble? After all, Haley's dad is certain of her love for him and he expressed his love for her every single day she lived under our roof (exactly 8,393 days to be exact ☺).

The week before the wedding Haley had bridal pictures made at the wedding venue. We all thought it would be a good idea if her dad went with us so as to see her "before" the actual day of the wedding. He did great. They both did.

They also did great the day of the wedding. There were several pictures made of the bridal party and no real waterworks to speak of.

When the wedding began Reggie seated his mother and then he seated me. Not a lot of fanfare (except that I did squeeze his hand when he dropped me off at my seat. Not good.)

He made his way back to Haley and stood beside her in his most honored spot - The Father of the Bride. The entire wedding party made their way around to the front so Haley and Reggie were left standing all alone. It would be a few moments before they were to make their grand entrance.

This was the moment Haley "chose to speak" - so not good.

*"I love you, Daddy." That was all she said, but those four little words and the relationship they represent **define her as a person** and define her dad's most cherished role since the day the doctor put her into his arms and uttered four little words of his own - "Congratulations! It's a girl."*

To state that woman was created for man is true in one sense and in another extremely short-sided. She was God's creation. *So are you.* She was defined on His arm. *So are you.* She was God's to give - *His ownership.*

Please remember, the very first wedding took place in a perfect world. Sin and selfishness were on the horizon, but right here it was all good! ALL GOOD! Can you imagine? No? Neither can I.

I have recently been exposed to a book entitled Quest for More by Dr. Paul David Tripp. (Very good book!) Dr. Tripp sets the stage for our fallen existence by giving a vivid description of *the perfect world*. I have chosen several phrases from his description to help us grasp "the before."

*Gorgeous and stunning beauty - multihued flowers, no insects - no thorns, thistles - trees laden with the lushest, sweetest, fruit - animals frolicked, fed, mated and produced without fear of predators - all at peace - people (Adam and Eve) lived in joyful, unafraid and unashamed community with one another - no stealing, lying, cheating, harsh words, abusive actions, strategies of vengeance, sexual immorality, broken families or corrupt government. No one struggled with depression, anxiety, **issues of identity**, paralyzing regret, anger, envy, compulsion, addiction, fear, guilt, aloneness, hopelessness, or doubt. People did not suffer from injury, disease or old age. No hospital vigils, no viewings of the deceased - no need to ask for forgiveness - no need to forgive.*

People (Adam and Eve) lived in heartfelt, loving, obedient worship of God. They worshipped the Creator and managed creation instead of worshipping creation and managing their Creator. There was no doubt of His goodness and no fear of His anger. There was no overt rebellion or subtle disobedience. They obeyed his words and listened to his wisdom. People loved God's glory and in no way lived for their own.

It is so hard for us to wrap our minds around a world *where sin and selfishness did not exist*. Even if we could *imagine* a perfect existence we are unable to see it to the depth in which *we need to see it* in order **to be defined there**. There is simply too much subjective pain that skews our vision.

Ask the Lord to help you get to *that* place - His perfect world - in your heart and in your head. It would really help us to get past the chauvinistic and feministic thought that permeates our postmodern existence and more importantly our understanding of *who we are*.

The original perfect creation was broken by the Fall but redeemed at the Cross. All the hate skews our understanding of all His love. If only we could see ourselves in light of the original plan. In the Garden of Eden, there was no sin to taint our understanding of His definition of us. Oh the thought! If only we could view the cross in light of the Garden.

Donna, why is this so necessary? *(It hurts my head!)*

The Fall ruined everything. The way you see yourself is ruined. The way you imagine others seeing you is ruined. Our relationships with other people are ruined by the sin and selfishness that permeates our existence. The way we are defined is ruined - it is broken.

We must blame sin and stop blaming each other.

There is MOST CERTAINLY personal responsibility here, please do not misunderstand. My point is this - aren't you exhausted of being defined by your sin and the sin imposed on you? I sure am! I want to be seen! I long to be known as I am truly known!! I desire to live in the shadow of the cross where the Fall has been rectified. I am weary of being defined by others reactions to me and of me. I want to know how God sees me - truly sees me. The God Who Sees, Sees Me! And, because He sees me through the blood of Jesus He sees me as His beautiful bride - perfect in every way. Oh! What a thought!

Woman was created for man so that they (man and woman) would know the joy of relationship. It was not because Adam (man) *was so* all-important - so much more valued than woman that God sent a subservient to meet his every whim - but rather Adam's designated need was a need for relationship. He was not whole on his own. The image God longed to "create" when He created "them" was an image that represented relationship.

What about me, Donna? I am not married. I have never been married. Am I incomplete? Have I not known the image of God?

It all broke. It all fell to the ground with one loud CRASH! *Eden was how it was supposed to be - no sin*. When Creation fell the original design was reworked. Enter Plan A. That's right - Plan A. ***Jesus was slain before the foundation of the World. It was always about***

Him. Eden is a beautiful picture of what a world without sin looks like . But **Plan A was always Jesus.** So, if you have not experienced what the world calls **being chosen** please know that you were chosen **before the foundation of the World** by our beautiful Prince, the Second Adam, the One for Whom you were created - King Jesus.

The Father has a soft spot for his daughters. *He sent me here to tell you...He really has a soft spot for you.*

Take His arm...

Please SOAP Psalm 45:2-8 (and work on your vows).

Day Three - From My Heart

This one lesson is **the lesson** I have dreaded writing for as long as the Lord has been whispering *this* study to my heart. Please keep an open mind as you work through this lesson *knowing* that if you take *this lesson* out of the context of the study as a whole *you will be making a huge mistake.*

Allow the Lord to challenge your heart. Please know - I have experienced phenomenal teachers, preachers and professors who have handled this subject matter beautifully - and I have suffered greatly to the contrary. I tremble beneath the weight of this message aware of my own brokenness and my own humanity. I always handle the Word of God with great fear and trembling. This is a very important lesson due to the strongholds that need to be broken and the freedom we long for - *beneath His gaze.*

Please also know that *your heart* is broken, first by The Fall and secondly by men, who broken themselves, break others, (husbands, sons, brothers, fathers, co-laborers). This is not an opinion and it is not experiential - it is a fact.

Your heart (and my heart) is also greatly influenced by a postmodern, feministic culture trying to right something that is *seriously wrong.* Feminism was birthed as an attempt to right an injustice. Like all of man's attempts at *fixing what is broken,* feminism has gone too far. However, while feministic thought is sinful - founded on hate, it was an answer to chauvinistic thought, also sinful - founded on hate as well. The pendulum always swings too far.

You and I have been influenced by the Fall where chauvinism and feminism originated. Sin's curse reaches far beyond the sexist jokes no one really thinks are funny. The effect this one area of teaching has on all of our relationships is astounding. Allow me to pray for us as we begin.

Father, I am sitting here before You longing to be taught by You. I confess my brokenness with regard to this material. Please guard my heart and my words so as not to reflect hurt but rather healing. Please, Lord, I know you are sending "the least" with this message - but it is Your message. Please supersede any faulty opinion or thought process found in me and allow your Truth to break through with life-changing power.

You know I have come to this place kicking and screaming, but in obedience I come, knowing that obedience brings blessing. Bless me, Lord. Heal me, Lord. As a result, bring blessing and healing to my sisters whom I love so very much.

In the powerful Name of Jesus, Amen.

Day Three - Boom!!!

Then the world broke. When Adam and Eve fell - they took us with them and...Oh! What a crash!

Who is responsible for the Fall - Adam or Eve?

Let's face it- Eve has been blamed. Generations of men and women blame her. Paul the master theologian pins the blame on Adam (Romans 5:12-21). They both sinned. They both desired to be their own god and when they fell they took all of mankind with them.

Today, I want to talk about the effects The Fall has had on women, in particular.

Please look at Genesis 3:16. What was the curse with regard to women?

The blessing was the relationship. Sin's curse was on the relationship - first our relationship to God (all blessing before the Fall) and second, our relationship to each other (all blessing before the Fall).

So many people (women) believe that various aspects of reproduction and child-bearing represent "the curse" but it is *much more* than that.

Pain in childbirth came as a result of The Fall. Sickness, pain and death were ushered into the world as a result of sin.

The real "curse" for women is found in the second part of verse 16. *Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.* (Uh-oh! Not good.)

What do you think this means?

Please circle the words *desire* and *rule*.

In order to understand it we need to go back to the Garden of Eden *before* the Fall. Then, we will need to watch what happens to this perfect relationship as sin enters. I cannot overstate this...sin is synonymous with selfishness. Watch what happens when selfishness enters.

Please, please read the following sentence twice: **The following description does not take into account redemption - Jesus. Think of this description as the moment creation FELL! This is the state of man minus redemption.**

First of all, in the Garden of Eden there was no such thing as desire. Everything was supplied. Everything.

Somewhere in the crash woman's significance became dependent on man. You will desire a husband, your desire will be for your husband and your worth will be determined by how well you please him. He will rule over you. He gets to choose.

All men want to be desired. Desire does not sound like such a bad thing, right? It would not be such a bad thing if you desired him for him, but because of the Fall and sin's curse your desire is not about him - it is all about you. Therefore your desire looks like control and manipulation. Have you ever met a woman who does not have a control problem - at least on some level? That is because woman is fiendishly searching for worth, for validation and significance. The curse packed all those things inside a selfish relationship with man.

You may be single - how does this apply to you? Are you out from under the curse because you are not in a relationship? No! The curse has everything to do with your empty ache, your feelings of *not being chosen for relationship*. Within the realm of the curse you are defined by the empty spot beside you.

The second part of the curse has to do with man's response to your desire to be validated by him. His rule is also selfish and self-motivated - it is not about you. It is all about what he deems valuable. In the Garden, Adam was the functioning head but it was not about power, it was about stewardship. Eve's job was to assist in the ruling process (Gen. 1:28). The curse made man suspect of her capabilities to rule and as a result he was put in charge. She spends her days trying to please him, trying to prove herself. Her worth is determined through the subjective eyes of fallen man.

We live in the middle of postmodern, feminist USA, the home of the free! It is hard for free-thinking women like you and me to imagine living under sin's curse to its fullest extent, but collectively, historically, man's treatment of woman has been atrocious, even maddening. Our liberties spare us from the societal abuse that is prevalent in other cultures, but being an American does not spare us from sin's curse. On the contrary, sin's curse is found in the heartache of the lonely woman who cannot connect with her husband, the heartache of the lonely woman who desires the love of a husband, and the heartache of the lonely woman who is beaten regularly by her husband.

Under the curse, what man thinks of us defines us.

You may be screaming..."**Oh no it does not!**"

What significant men in our lives *did not do*...we decided *we did not need* (and we will even fight you over it!).

Please hear these words spoken tenderly over you...

Since the Fall of mankind men have been abusing God's design. When He could bear it no more the mighty Prince, the unconditional lover of your soul, came riding in and rescued you from the hands of fallen men. (Enter - King Jesus!)

It is very important that I state loudly...**man is not the Enemy**. He is also under sin's curse. **Sin's curse is the Enemy**.

Please understand, if you are a daughter of God, your significance, your value, your worth is determined by Christ alone as a result of your relationship with Him. If you have asked Jesus to come into your heart and rescue you from your sin, the effects of the Fall - sin's curse - **no longer defines you**.

However, know this...we still live in a fallen world among the fallen. Sin will affect us, but we should NEVER allow it to define us.

Sin's curse states...I will desire to please man and He gets to decide my fate, my worth, my value and my significance. Frustrating! Can you identify an area of your life where you have felt this curse?

Next week we will discuss Abraham and the effects of the curse on men, but for now please look at what was cursed with regard to men, Genesis 3:17-19.

Man will obsess over the work of his hands, (made difficult due to the Fall) and woman will obsess over the state of her marriage/home, (made difficult due to the Fall).

I counsel a lot of women. I cannot recall even one woman I have counseled (ever) whose issue did not in some way involve her home, marriage, children...relationships. It is what we think about. It is what we obsess over. It is what is broken. What is broken in your life?

I am going to list some words used intermittently throughout scripture with the word *desire*. Please respond to these words with your thoughts, your feelings or particular examples.

- Crave _____
(I feel as though a large part of my life I have been jumping up and down in the corner yelling, "Here I am. Please notice me." Crave attention - His attention (whoever he might be)
- Covet _____
(Have you ever coveted a friend's husband, marriage relationship?)
- Affection _____
- Snare for you _____
- Obsession _____
- Appeal to _____
- Hope in _____
- Dreams _____
- Make requests of _____

- Wishes _____
- Please _____

Now I am going to list some words used intermittently throughout scripture with the word *rule*. Please respond to these words with your thoughts, your feelings or particular examples.

- Master _____
- Reign _____
- King _____
- Exploit _____
- Authority _____

Frustrating isn't it? When you have an ache that only Someone else can fill.

When Reggie and I were first married there was a whole lot broken on the inside of me. I was so angry with Reggie for not being able to fix me. He would leave for work in the morning and by the time he arrived home in the afternoon I was cocked and loaded. I would fill him full of holes before we went to bed...every night.

One day Reggie said something to me that changed me forever. He said, "Honey, you are looking for me to fill places in your heart I was never meant to fill. You are going to have to allow Jesus to meet the cries of your heart."

He was right. Once I allowed the Lord to heal my broken heart I stopped being angry with Reggie. Besides, as much as I love Reggie he is no match for the Master. No one satisfies like Jesus.

I once was lost (the desert of my soul) but now I'm found (The God Who sees, sees me) was blind (because of sin's curse) but now I see (I have now seen the One Who sees me).

This is exactly what Jesus wants to do in your life. He wants to reverse the effects of the curse (for all His daughters). He alone can meet the needs of your heart.

Before God issued the curse...HE PROMISED THE BLESSING!

Please write Genesis 3:15 in the space below.

You know over the past couple of days we have talked about a lot of theology. I love to study God's Word, but not for the sake of knowledge alone. I love to study His Word for the application. What does Genesis 3:15 mean to you and to me?

Do you know what the word *enmity* means?

It means hostility, hate, antagonism. I know that it does not surprise you that the serpent here represents (is) Satan. Is there enmity between Him and the Church? YES!!

The beautiful part of this verse is the promise of Satan's demise. With one crushing blow at Calvary, Jesus, (the promised seed) put an end to the Enemy of God. Hallelujah!!

If you have ever seen the *Passion of the Christ* you are aware of the opening scene in the garden when a large snake winds its way through the legs of Jesus (assumably unaware). How powerful the moment when Jesus raises His foot and with one large BOOM! He crushes the head of the snake. What a mighty Savior!

Do you realize, (do I realize) this is exactly what Jesus did on our behalf at Calvary. With one powerful BOOM! He took care of our Enemy for all eternity. As children of God we are no longer under the curse of sin.

Apply this Truth to a frustrating situation in your life. If you are a child of God you are FREE from sin's curse. The broken places in our lives that frustrate us are the places where this blessed Truth needs to be applied. John 8:36 (the words of Jesus) says "*If the Son sets you free you are free indeed.*" Hear Him speak this over you. Write what you hear Him say.

Please SOAP Psalm 45:2-8 (and work on your vows).

Day Four - This Man is Making Me Crazy!

Who among us has not uttered these words?

Okay, I just need to confess this to you...after yesterday's lesson I feel like falling on a pair of scissors. My head hurts! No, my soul hurts!

A little compassion for Sarah, please.

We purposely have not dealt with Sarai (Sarah) before now because I thought it only fair that we approach her in light of the Fall (and the curse). Even in the best of circumstances (Friend of God, promised seed, God's chosen people) we are ALL under sin's curse.

Several weeks ago I was contemplating Sarah and I prayed...

Lord, I have to be honest with you...I would have never desired for him to have a baby by someone else. Even if it meant that your plan would not have been realized, I would have NEVER been alright with him having a baby by another. What possessed her to do that?

Sarah was willing to do anything to please this man. Genesis 3:16 says, "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

Before we look at Sarah right here in chapter 16 let's look at her history with *this man*.

The first mention of Sarah is found in Genesis, chapter 11. In verse 29 she is identified as Abram's wife. The next mention of her is 11:30. How is she defined there?

The word barren is synonymous with desolate - deserted. *Sometimes words are so hateful.*
The desert of the soul.

The next mention of Sarai is found in chapter 12. Please note that when God called Abram in verse one of this chapter Sarai was not mentioned. She accompanied Abram as God instructed in 12:5.

The Lord made another appearance in 12:7. To whom did He appear?

The plot thickens in the latter part of chapter 12. Please familiarize yourself with their story by reading Genesis 12:10-20.

Sarai was identified very beautiful in verse 11 (by Abraham) and in verse 14 (by the Egyptians). She was favored by Pharaoh and His officials because of her beauty.

How much respect do you lose for Abraham in verse 13? He said, Say you are my sister so that _____
(for your sake - for Sarai's sake????!?!?!?) and _____
will be spared by you."

Abram was sure treated well because of her was he not? What did he acquire? (verses 16)

(Side note - enter Hagar. Scholars believe that this is where Abram and Sarai acquired Hagar.)

Who steps in to defend Sarai and in what way? (12:17-20)

When we cannot trust the men in our lives to treat us the way we were intended to be treated, God WILL step in and take care of us.

Okay! Do you hear my blood boiling!?

Sarai was placed in Pharaoh's harem and we are not told whether or not he took her to sleep with her. If he did not sleep with her she was most certainly protected by God. Maybe the diseases came upon them before he had a chance. He was obviously smitten with her for Abraham to have been treated so well.

The Lord appears to Abram yet again in 13:14. Sarai is not mentioned here either.

She also was not present when God *cuts covenant* with Abraham in chapter 15. Why?

You and I must understand that this was a different world from the world in which we live. Women knew their place. I know that sounds very *something* - but hey! We've come a long way baby!

There are some redeeming aspects if you know how to spot them, however. God defended Sarai's honor (Genesis 12:17-20). God recognized Sarah as Abraham's wife. God assumed that Abraham and Sarah understood that what was promised to and through Abraham was intended to come to and through Sarah as well. Abraham was the head and God treated

him as such. My husband has a saying that most certainly applies here - *Anything that has two heads is a monster.*

No! He is not referencing me when he says that! What a question! ☹

Abraham was selfish and self-centered and grandiose in his own mind and...

Aren't we glad God chooses to used flawed men and women.

The Lord has most certainly broken my heart over Sarah.

Please look at Genesis 16:2a and write Sarah's words below.

Who did she think had kept her from having children?

I wonder what Sarah must have felt when God first starting making promises to Abraham. Do you think she dreamed of being a mom? Did she allow herself to dream? After all, the first mention of her in chapter 11 **defines her** as barren.

Do you dream of a day when what defines you now, defines you no more?

Do you think that as she listened to *this man* talk of all God had promised him that somehow she would be part of the promise. The years she waited to send in *another* - do those years represent her hope in being a part of the promise?

Under the curse Sarah's desire was for Abraham and he ruled over her. His desires took center stage and - oh what a mess!

Please write the last six words found in Genesis 16:2.

He agreed!!! Are you kidding me?

Can you imagine how Sarah must have felt when Abraham agreed? He thought she was the problem too.

Please write the first sentence of verse 4.

*For ten years she feared she was the reason God had not blessed. Hagar was pregnant. What she feared had been confirmed. She **never was** part of the promise.*

The Desert of the Soul.

Sometimes it is not easy to pinpoint the effects of sin's curse in our own lives but I hope you can see it here.

God would have never sacrificed His daughter in this way. When God chose Abraham He chose Abraham and Sarah. *She should have NEVER compromised. NEVER!!*

God had a new definition for Sarah! *NO LONGER BARREN - MOTHER OF NATIONS!!*

We have so much more to unravel in the weeks to come.

Please SOAP Psalm 45:2-8 (and work on your vows).

Day Five - My Vows To The King

He sees me - In the beginning...on His arm.

He sees me - Under the curse...broken - on the arm of another

*He sees me - Redeemed...**His** most radiant Bride.*

To be able to see sin's curse it is necessary to first see God's original design - a world that knew no sin. I know that we have only skimmed the surface, but I have a much clearer understanding of the before and after picture. As a result, I have a much clearer understanding of my need for a Savior. Praise the beautiful Name of Jesus. I was once defined by my brokenness and my shame. Now **I am His**. *I melt beneath His gaze.*

Have you been working on those vows? I hope it has been an exercise that has stretched your heart. Please use the following space to write these vows to the King.

A love letter to the King - *the One Who defines me.*

