

THE GOD WHO SEES  
NBC STAFF & FACULTY DEVOTIONAL  
Oct. 21, 2020

Greetings from Iowa! Where it was 90 degrees yesterday and ice on the windshield this morning! Well, maybe not quite that bad, but close!

Thank you so much for the opportunity to be with you today! It is a privilege and an honor.

A recent devotional I read by Eugene Peterson stemmed from just the title of Psalm 3, which reads, “**A Psalm of David when he fled from his son Absalom.**”

I was immediately struck by the thought that it was odd to base a daily devotional on the mere title of a Psalm – and such a sad one at that. However, Peterson elaborated that the life of David was full of incidents like that. King David’s life was certainly colorful wasn’t it? As Peterson went on to say, so is everyone else’s life. Granted, maybe not quite as colorful, but everyone’s life is full of conflict, failure, and fear, love and betrayal, loss and salvation.

Every day, every incident, is part of your story and thereby, the greater story of God. Each of us, collectively and individually, are certainly living through some colorful days of story right now, **are we not?**

This morning, I feel God has led me to share a story from my heart with you. I arrived at NBC as a fairly, young Christian. Somewhat young chronologically, but **very, young spiritually**. I was a first-generation Christian in my family, with a childhood and background that movies and books are made of. Thankfully, I quickly learned a sacred secret of NBC that you all know so well and that is **NBC is as much spiritual formation as it is educational preparation.**

In the fall of 2004, I had an intense encounter with God, alone in the parking lot during the classroom break. While my sanctification experience had occurred prior to NBC, this moment was nearly as significant. As a member of the counseling cohort that year, I had recently shared my story, as every student in each cohort did at that point in the program. It was an especially difficult and unpleasant experience for me. On this particular evening, another student had just shared their journey. I was completely unprepared for the way his story would intersect with my own.

Everything I knew at that point about Christ, God’s word, and this calling I was surrendering to, was being challenged. I stood in that parking lot literally kicking, quite forcefully mind you, the tires of my car and ranting at God! Questions, hurt, promises, threats, all of it - pouring out of

me! Had anyone been observing my tantrum from a distance, I'm sure they were concerned about my mental state!

When suddenly a sound broke into my "fit" and grabbed my attention! The bell tower was playing; *Trust and Obey*.

What transpired between God and I in that moment, has been a cement to hold me together throughout these years of ministry. God began a specific discussion with me on that hill that has ebbed and flowed through these 16 years since, growing deeper and more powerful than I ever anticipated. These love notes to me, as I have come to call them, are reminders that He is the God Who Sees!

I can certainly relate to Hagar uttering those words in Genesis 16:13. Hagar found herself, somewhat of her own doing, in a moment of fear and confusion, heartache and pain and I'm sure no small measure of despair. This situation is similar to Peterson's comparison of several incidents in the life of King David. When Hagar found herself with no security for the future, her unborn child's life in jeopardy, and nowhere to turn, **she found the ONE who can always be found! Amen?**

We have a bit of an advantage Hagar did not have at that time. We can find comfort in God's Word. I've come to depend heavily on the comfort and promises I find in the Psalms.

Psalm 71 has become so familiar to me. Verse 20 reads, **"You have allowed me to suffer much hard-ship. but you will restore me to life again and lift me up from the depths of the earth."**

Since coming to my current ministry assignment just over 4 years ago, I've experienced the physical decline and mental breakdown of my husband of 25 years which he eventually ended in divorce, God has healed me of breast cancer, I've endured the imprisonment of two adult children, one of which is still incarcerated and may be for the remainder of my days, and in about 10 days I will sit with my oldest grandson Quentin, whom I have raised from a small boy, as he undergoes a serious brain surgery. Many times, in these four years I have cried out, **"God do you see me?"**

**That was my ultimate question that night before the bell tower played. "God do you see me? Do You see my suffering? Do You know how hard this is for me? Do You care?"**

I did not share those things to gain your sympathy or even empathy today. I shared them to demonstrate the power of His regenerating restoration in our lives. **We do experience some depths of pain on this earth. But His miracle rescue still raises us to the highest places!**

These are extremely challenging days in our world. With little doubt, these past 9 months or so, have been the most difficult days ever for those serving in ministry. I believe God is still

directing students to NBC and to each of you personally. **While you may never meet them face to face, He is still leading men and women who need to have these types of encounters with Him, where they ultimately settle the question and commit themselves to trusting Him regardless of the cost!**

Men and women who, at times, will need someone like you to remind them of the words of Psalm 69:29, so much like 71:20. It reads, **“I am burdened and broken by this pain. When your miracle rescue comes to me, it will lift me to the highest place.”**

Oh, there will be many moments when the urge to ask, **“God do you see me?”** will be overwhelming. **As the line in a recent movie goes, “suffering does not destroy our faith; it refines and strengthens it, and God is worth trusting even when you cannot see him working!”**

Being asked to join you today was another love note from my Father, **confirming yet again that He does see me. He knows exactly where I am!** I had no choice but to obey, because I settled the question that night on that sacred hill as the towers played. No matter what lies ahead – I will Trust Him and obey!

Many times, you may have no idea you are being used by God to speak into another’s life – **the concept that they are seen, they are known, and they are loved by the God Who Sees.** Never underestimate your ministry through this institution! Men such as Harold Graves, Alan Lyke, Hiram Sanders, Laurel Matson, Terry Lambright, Tom King, Dan Powers, Richard Lewis and Alan Duce – **each of those men are still impacting people for Jesus through my ministry. The same will be true of you for years to come.**

In all actuality, since transparency is so very, difficult in the church, you, yourself, may need to be reminded today that **He sees you! He loves you! And He is working on your behalf!** You can trust that!

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,  
but our toil He doth richly repay.  
Not a grief nor loss,  
not a frown nor a cross  
but is blest if we trust and obey.

**There truly is no other way!**

Peterson said all prayer is prayed in the middle of a story. **In Hagar’s story, God not only saw her, but she also saw God!** That is my prayer for each of us today, that we would again see the One who always sees us!

If you are burdened and broken by the pain of this world, or perhaps the pain in your own life, believe me when I say this – **when His miracle rescue comes, it will lift you to the highest place.**

I hope that you find some encouragement today in these thoughts and that they empower you to help others see the One who sees them!

**Prayer!**

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Rev. Angela Bentley, NBC Alumna and Pastor of Shenandoah Church of the Nazarene in Shenandoah, Iowa.

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