A FAMILY TO BLESS THE NATIONS

SELAH

The Mount of Seeing

Genesis 22

Five mornings. Ten minutes each.

MONDAY
GOD'S FAMILY IS CALLED | Genesis 22:1-2

TUESDAY
GOD'S FAMILY IS STOPPED | Genesis 22:9-12

WEDNESDAY
GOD'S FAMILY IS SEEN | Genesis 16:13-14

THURSDAY
GOD'S FAMILY IS MET | Genesis 22:13-14

FRIDAY
GOD'S FAMILY IS SENT | Genesis 22:15-18

You will be asked to write things down this week. A notebook works. So does the notes app on your phone. Either one is fine.

NW Hills
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

MONDAY

SELAH

GOD'S FAMILY IS CALLED.

STOP

This is the first of five mornings. Before anything else, know that nothing is going to fall apart in the next ten minutes. The email will still be there. So will the list. Whatever you were about to start can wait that long. Sit somewhere you can be still and let this be the first thing you do rather than the thing you fit in later. It's okay to stop.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

Write your answers down.

EXHALE

Start with your breathing. It's the one thing your body does whether or not you pay attention to it. This morning, pay attention to it. Slow it down on purpose.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

As you inhale, pray, "You called me by name..."
As you exhale, pray, "...here I am, Lord."

LOOK

Yesterday you heard these verses read out loud in a room full of people. This morning they are just for you. Genesis 22 opens with God saying one word, and the word is a name.

Read slowly, and notice how little God explains.

Read through the verses slowly, two times, before you move on.

> *Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."*
>
> **Genesis 22:1-2 NIV**

ASK

God called Abraham by name, and Abraham answered before he knew what was being asked.

> Before anything else. This is the hardest command in the Bible, and it is a one time moment in one man's story. God is not going to ask you for your child. When Israel later started sacrificing children, God called it detestable and said it never even entered his mind. Part of what this chapter is doing is explaining to Israel why they were never to do what everyone around them did. If you are a parent reading this with your stomach in a knot, that knot is not something God is asking you to carry.

- Abraham says "Here I am" before he hears what God wants. When was the last time you answered God without knowing what came next?
- God calls him by name. Does it ring true that God knows your name, or is that something you say more than something you believe?
- Notice how little God explains in verse 2. Where are you being asked to move right now without the full picture?

Write a short prayer telling God you are listening, even if you are not sure what he is going to say.

Or, if answering God feels out of reach this morning, write a prayer asking him to say your name in a way you can hear.

HEAR

This last part is the strangest one, and it's the one most people skip. You've done the reading and the writing, and now the pull is to close the page and get on with the day. Don't. Sit for two minutes without producing anything. You are not trying to think of something. You are listening. If it helps, pray this and then stop talking: “I'm listening for you, God. Speak to me.”

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

TUESDAY

SELAH

GOD'S FAMILY IS STOPPED.

STOP

A day has gone by since you did this. Something has happened in it, even if it was ordinary. Take a minute to notice what you're carrying this morning that you weren't carrying yesterday. Then set it down. It will still be there in ten minutes if you want it back.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

Write your answers down.

EXHALE

Breathe again, slower than feels natural. There is no skill in this and no way to do it wrong. You are putting your body in a posture your mind can follow.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

As you inhale, pray, "Stop my hands, Lord..."
As you exhale, pray, "...and open them again."

LOOK

Genesis moves fast. It can cover twenty years in a single sentence. So when it slows down and gives you every separate step of something, that is the writer taking hold of your arm. Watch how slowly these verses move.

Read through the verses slowly, two times, before you move on.

> *When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."*
>
> **Genesis 22:9-12 NIV**

ASK

God stopped Abraham's hand. Abraham did not stop it himself.

> It would be easy to read yesterday and today together and come away thinking that if you obey well enough, God will step in at the last second. That is not what this is. The rescue was not earned by three days of walking. The mountain was already named for it before Abraham left home. God's intervening is not a reward for getting it right.

- In Genesis 3 the first humans reached out their hand and took what was not given. Here Abraham reaches out his hand to give something up. What is different about the two hands?
- Abraham could not stop himself. God had to stop him. When has God interrupted you in a way you did not want at the time and are grateful for now?
- "You have not withheld." What is the one thing you are most certain you would withhold?

Write a prayer asking God to stop you where you need stopping.

Or, if you cannot name what is in your hands yet, write a prayer asking him to show you what you are holding.

HEAR

Most people go their whole lives without hearing God out loud. That is normal, and it is not a sign that something is wrong with you or with your faith. God speaks more often through a verse that will not leave you alone, or a thought that arrives carrying more weight than your other thoughts. Sit still and pray, “I'm listening for you, God. Speak to me.” Then stop.

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

WEDNESDAY

SELAH

GOD'S FAMILY IS SEEN.

STOP

It's Wednesday. Whatever you set down on Monday has probably picked itself back up by now. That is how weeks work. Set it down again. This is also the morning the whole thing can quietly turn into a task you get through rather than something you receive, so take the extra thirty seconds before you begin.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

Write your answers down.

EXHALE

Breathe. You are not trying to relax and this is not a technique. You are pointing your body at God for one minute before you point your mind at him.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

As you inhale, pray, "You are the God who sees..."
As you exhale, pray, "...and you see me."

LOOK

Today we step back six chapters. Hagar is pregnant, beaten, and running from a household that used her. God finds her in the desert. What she says next is the first time anyone in the

Bible gives God a name, and Abraham will not arrive at it for another six chapters. These are her words.

Read through the verses slowly, two times, before you move on.

> *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 the One who sees me." That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.*
>
> **Genesis 16:13-14 NIV**

ASK

A pregnant, beaten, runaway slave woman is the first person in Scripture to give God a name. She called him the God who sees me.

> Say the hard part out loud. Hagar was used, and then she was sent away, and the people who did it were the ones God had chosen. God seeing her does not make any of that acceptable, and the text never says it does. What it says is that God went and found her in the desert nobody else would enter. If you have been treated the way she was treated, this verse is not asking you to call the harm good. It is telling you that you were never invisible.

- Hagar names God from the lowest point of her life. What does it mean that the clearest sight of God in these chapters belongs to the person with the least standing?
- "I have now seen the One who sees me." Do you believe you are seen by God, or do you mostly believe you are overlooked?
- Who in your life is currently standing closer to Hagar's position than Abraham's? What would it look like to actually see them this week?

Write a short prayer using her name for God. Tell him what you want him to see.

Or, if being seen by God feels more frightening than comforting right now, write a prayer asking him to help you

believe he looks at you with kindness.

HEAR

Your mind is going to wander. It will happen inside of fifteen seconds and it is not a failure. When you notice, come back. Don't talk. Don't fill the quiet with more requests. Listening is the whole assignment. Pray, “I'm listening for you, God. Speak to me,” and then let it be quiet.

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

THURSDAY

SELAH

GOD'S FAMILY IS MET.

STOP

Fourth morning. You know the shape of this by now, and that can go one of two ways. It can become something your body knows how to do, which is the point. Or it can become a rut you move through without ever being in. Be intentional today.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

Write your answers down.

EXHALE

You have not had to remember to breathe once today. Your body has been doing it since before you woke up, and it never asked you for anything. Some of what keeps you alive has never needed your attention. Give this minute your attention anyway.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

As you inhale, pray, "Show me your face, God..."
As you exhale, pray, "...not just your gifts."

LOOK

These are the verses the whole week has been walking toward. They hold a name for God that people have carried for four thousand years, and a sentence where the writer steps

out of the story to speak straight to you.

Read through the verses slowly, two times, before you move on.

> *Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."*
>
> **Genesis 22:13-14 NIV**

ASK

Abraham named the mountain after what happened there. He called it The Lord Will Provide, and the Hebrew word underneath "provide" is the word for see.

> This verse gets used as a guarantee that God will hand you what you asked for. It is not that, and it would be cruel to pretend otherwise. Some of you have prayed for the ram and the thicket was empty. The diagnosis came back. The marriage ended. The person you prayed for died. If your faith had been a little more like Abraham's, a ram would not have appeared. That is not how any of this works. What Abraham carried down that mountain was not a ram. It was a name for God he did not have three days earlier. The mountain is not called Provided. It is called Seeing.

- What have you been asking God to provide?
- If that thing never arrives, is God still worth having? Sit with the question a while before you answer it.
- The writer steps out of the story to tell you this mountain is where God is seen, not where things get handed out. What would change if you went looking for God rather than for an outcome?

Write a prayer asking God for himself. Name the thing you want, and then ask him for more of him than of it.

Or, if you are in the season where the thicket was empty, write down what you actually want to say to God about that. He can take it.

HEAR

Some people arrive at this part carrying a sense that God is put out with them, and that listening will mean hearing a list of what is wrong. That is not what he is like. He is not tapping his foot. On Monday you told him you were listening. He has not gotten tired of you since. Pray it again and wait.

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

FRIDAY

SELAH

GOD'S FAMILY IS SENT.

STOP

Last one. Before you start, look back at what you have written this week. Not to grade it. Just to notice what kept showing up. Something has been repeating itself in your answers, and that is usually the thing God has been saying.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

Write your answers down.

EXHALE

You have done this four times now. Your body has started to learn that slowing down is safe. That is worth keeping past today.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

As you inhale, pray, "You blessed me to bless..."
As you exhale, pray, "...send me out today."

LOOK

These are the last words God ever speaks to Abraham. Whole lives get summed up in less. Read them the way you would read the end of a long letter.

Read through the verses slowly, two times, before you move on.

> *The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."*
>
> **Genesis 22:15-18 NIV**

ASK

God swore an oath on himself, because there was nothing higher to swear on. And what he swore was that the whole world would be blessed through this family.

> Read verse 18 carefully. It says "because you have obeyed me," and that can sound like Abraham earned something. He did not. God made this promise back in chapter 12, before Abraham had done a single thing. Grace came first and it always does. What God does here is fold Abraham's yes into a promise that was already his. Not payment. Participation.

- The blessing runs through this family and out to everyone else. Who has God put in front of you that you have been quietly treating as outside of it?
- On Monday, God called Abraham by name. Today, God sends him out toward the nations. What has God been calling you toward that you have been slow to walk into?
- Name one thing you could do in the next seven days that would leave somebody outside your circle better off.

Write a prayer offering God your yes. Be specific about what you are saying yes to.

Or, if your yes feels thin this morning, write a prayer asking God to make you willing to be willing.

HEAR

You may want this last morning to hand you something conclusive. It might not. God often finishes a week like this quietly, with something small that only makes sense later. Pray, “I'm listening for you, God. Speak to me,” and give it two full minutes before you get up.

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.