

## Place Hacking 2

Genesis 21: 8-21; Romans 6: 1-11; Matthew 10: 24-39

How many places hacked this week? For those who were not here last week place hacking is boldly gaining unauthorized access to parts of cities that few, if any, people have ever seen. Jesus' disciples are called to also boldly go where no one has gone before. Last week you were charged to go places that make you uncomfortable rather than old family members, work place, communities, or neighborhoods gain access. You know like the old Star Trek saga, "boldly go where no one has gone before."

We now live in a society with access to people in many different ways. We can easily stay in touch. Growing up we live in the local community or rode bicycles on the other side of town to connect with classmates, friends, and of course the young who caught your eyes in the hallway. Sunday was family time. We visited with grandpa, grandma or Aunt Lela. The idea of having a pen pal across the oceans in countries like Japan, Korea, and Africa was intriguing.

Nevertheless, now we are able to connect through vast media; facebook, skype, snapchat, instagram, LinkedIn, and many other media information. Sadly with this wide range of technology we lose touch with our neighbors, the one neighbor that lives a few blocks from us or the classmate that we knew will do great things in their lives. This is why place hacking is so important.

However, Let me apologize I did not inform you all who awaits you and who you will see while place hacking. If we take time we will see seated in the crevices and alongside the roadway people waiting for someone to share a kind word or give a ray of hope, or

waiting to tell you their stories. Believers, there are some Ishmaels out there. Hagar still exists. Abraham and Isaac exist. However I must inform you of those you may encounter while place hacking. In sharing this Good News you will find people who feel like victims or a sense of alienation. Our job as the “called out” people of God is to share that human rejection does not mean divine rejection. Human rejection is not their identity but a circumstance which can be altered by reconnecting them back to the promises of God. The truth is we are all created in the image of God.

You may ask who are Hagar, Ishmael, Abraham, and Sarah. These are those who live in our communities. Ideally to live in a “Good Society” everyone will feel loved, accepted, nourished, and healthy. We are the stories however we are not the only stories of God. Each individual represent a story or a grace of God’s love for humanity.

Ishmael the first born will receive an inheritance although rejected by family members but accepted by God. Hagar a slave woman rejected, abused, and neglected by her husband, the other woman while bearing the pain of homelessness and excruciating pain of her son’s famine. As a severely afflicted slave Hagar ran away; as the first runaway slave. God seen her and called her by name. God sees and hears in their time of need. In addition Hagar converse with God woman of only two woman converse with God the other was Samson’s mother. Oops toss out the theology that woman shouldn’t preach in the pulpit. ☺ Abraham a husband, father, the figure head encounters all this in a neutral position while God informs him to let this happen. Abram let Sarah do what she seen as right in he eyes. Sarah the one who laughs at God, vengefully lashes at the slave woman, and jealousy fills her heart. When Sarah saw she was pregnant her mistress became

insignificant (trivial) in her eyes. Sarah saw her status lowered. However these are those that God still fulfill His promises. Not only to these people however to us today.

Our gospel lesson shares Jesus instructs the disciples of their place in the scheme of things the limits of their dignity but also its promises. In the epistle lesson Justification in Christ overcomes alienation because grace abounds. Therefore do not fear. The Bible is still relevant today.

According to Alan Cooper he states, “The Hagar story has been read by feminists, womanists, and Third World theologians and through their lenses of their life experiences and social locations.” These scholars list issues including surrogate motherhood; slavery and poverty; polygamy and concubinage; single mothers and their struggle to raise children; homelessness; women’s oppression of other women; sexual and physical abuse; racism; classism; sexism; and patriarchy; survival and liberation; whether God sided with the oppressed or the oppressor; and Jewish- Muslim- Christian dialogue.

However, I know you thought the bible is just a book of instructions. Yes, many read it as a S.O.P. standard of procedure document/ guidelines. You know the owners manual of a new phone or car or appliance. However what if you see the Bible differently more like a love letter. A book of God’s Unending love for humanity, God’s letter to reconcile humanity to himself.

We wonder why people do not attend our churches when all we give are orders, reprimands, and rigid living of life. Imagine The Word of God as inspiration and reconciling humanity to the Creator and to each other. If only we would share “The

Gospel Message” as good news or like mystery, drama, or romance novels, sharing while listening to the stories of others and not as though we have a patent on scripture or corner edge on God. Our society desires the church to become attentively listening people not listening to give a response but to listen as the other individual matters. OK engage with them like the novels you read like a Danielle Steel, Nicholas Sparks, Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Nikki Giovanni, Eric Jerome Dickey, or Maya Angelou type of novel. Ambassadors! do not you know that the Bible is the best seller and the most talked about book. And we keep “The Bible” as a sacred piece of document hidden in our hearts. Share!!!!!! Share!!!! Scriptures wait for us to share life, liberty, and never ending love God has for humanity.

You will encounter some people whose stories are not as neat as yours. People who do not cross every “T” nor dot every “I” their stories are not like yours, they do not announce as you do, nor do they wear or dress the same. Furthermore there are some trench coat wearing, hoodie wearing, body art wearing, drug taking people out there and they do not fit into the neat boxes we created. While I’m here! There is some money hungry, educated, silver spoon, Armani; red bottom shoes folks that need your presences.

Furthermore, the church is not the only place to see the presence of God. Julia Seymour stated, “All of creation, including all people, receives this promise of hope and a future. God considers each person worthy of shaping, of wholeness, and of salvation. We are called into seeing the worthiness in one another.” Therefore while you are out place hacking see others as worthy individuals and share your story their story and hear and see

the promises of God through each place you go. Remember God is with them and their stories matter as God awaits humanity redemption.