

ELROY!**Genesis 16; 1 Peter 1:6-9**

Intro: Does anyone remember Elroy? I mean, the youngest child of George and Jane Jetson? Just in case, let me refresh your memory – because it goes back a ways.

The Jetsons were a cartoon family that was off in the future somewhere. It was a Sunday night sitcom that ran for 24 episodes from September of 1962 to March of 1963 – yes, the Jetsons were 60 years ago! The show was on at the same time as THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY on NBC and DENNIS THE MENACE on CBS – or, in my case, the Sunday Evening Service at Gratersford BIC; so it's not surprising it only lasted about six months.

It's funny, that so many of the things that we thought we're so futuristic on the Jetsons in 1962 are, practically, what we live with today.

George Jetson was the dad, and he was married to Jane, and they had a teenage daughter named Judy, and a son named Elroy. They also had a dog named Astro, and a robot named Rosie who was a maid and housekeeper – and if I remember correctly, I think for a robot, she was a bit snarky.

I don't know if anybody here knows of anyone other than Elroy Jetson with the name, Elroy. Perhaps you do, but it's pretty rare, I'm sure. It seems to me that anyone who might be named that in a TV show or in a movie or in a book, will either be a little boy like on the Jetsons, or some kind of a goofy guy who seems to live up to the perceived goofiness of the name.

The truth is, it's quite a name to live up to. In Genesis 16, which Karen read earlier, Hagar, the Egyptian slave girl of Sarai, encountered God and she recognized right away that he was the only one who truly saw her and her plight. He was the only one that really understood what she had been through, and he gave her promises about the baby she was carrying in her womb. After her encounter with God she cries out, in Hebrew, El Roi! No, she wasn't Jane Jetson calling for her son, instead she is proclaiming that God is a God who sees.

If you look at the chapters that lead up to Genesis 16, you know that in two different places, in chapter 12, and then again in chapter 15, God calls Abram, and then he promises Abram that his descendants will be as abundant as the stars in the sky. But, here in our text, Abram was about 86 years old and his wife Sarai was about 76 years old. So, if this was going to happen it needed to happen soon. And can you blame them if they both had doubts?

So, despite God's promises, Sarai decides to engineer the situation.

It's interesting how she does it. She says that God has denied her and Abram children. In fact she uses an accusatory tone and actually says, *the Lord has prevented me from bearing children*. Genesis 16:2. And this makes her feel perfectly justified to step up and do what God wasn't doing and make sure that her husband has a child. She does this by giving her slave to her husband to impregnate. Yes, that's what she did. It was a thing in those days. Not a good thing. In fact it's a terrible thing, but it was a thing.

Sarai, who by the way, will eventually be named Sarah, was not the only guilty party by a long shot. Abram – who by the way, will be renamed Abraham eventually, is remembered for his incredible faith, as we read about him here in Genesis, and then later by Paul and the writer of Hebrews. So we shouldn't be too hard on Sarai for engaging in a perfectly legal and socially acceptable and culturally encouraged practice. The problem is Sarai and Abram were followers of the one true God who had promised them much more, if only they followed his clear plan. They didn't see what their slave saw, and that is a good place to land.

The people of God should . . .

Never try to hurry along what God has in progress

- All three of the actors in this account got ahead of God.
 - Sarai gave another woman to her husband so that his line would continue. Just think about that for a bit. What wife wants her husband to sleep with another woman?! No woman wants that. Even in a culture that allows polygamy, it is a system that doesn't work because God's design since Creation is for one man and one woman to be faithful to one another. Our marriage covenant says we are to forsake all others and remain true to one another, as long as we both shall live. But Sarai got ahead of God.
 - Abram could have said to Sarai, "Thanks but no thanks! That's sweet of you in a twisted kinda way, but, seeing as I believe what God told me in the last chapter and it's counted to me as

righteousness (Genesis 15:6), I'm going to wait for his plan to unfold." But Abram didn't wait. He wasted no time making a slave girl pregnant.

- And Hagar, a victim and plaything in a scheme to accelerate God's plan, seemed to get haughty and this angered Sarai. And Sarai got angry at Abram, and Abram was confused and said "Whatever!" and in a clear case of YOU CAN'T MAKE THIS STUFF UP! Hagar ran away. Into the desert. And that was not God's plan either, because running solves nothing.
- Here is a fact: Getting ahead of God's plan NEVER WORKS! There are any number of ways we can do this. There things that are available to us these days that are legal and everybody is doing them and maybe they even seem harmless – but maybe THEY. ARE. JUST. NOT. RIGHT. When you are considering something that seems like it might not be God's plan for you – it probably isn't. Pray about it. Lay it before the Lord. Seek Godly counsel from other Christ Followers. Look into Scripture. The writer of Proverbs, said it like this:

*There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.*

*Even in laughter the heart may ache,
and the end of joy may be grief.*

*The backslider in heart will be filled with the fruit of his ways,
and a good man will be filled with the fruit of his ways.*

*The simple believes everything,
but the prudent gives thought to his steps.*

*One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil,
but a fool is reckless and careless.* Proverbs 14:12-16

Seek God – he knows the plans he has for you (Jeremiah 29:11) – don't get ahead of those plans. Going on our own plans will backfire and blow up and, as in the case of this ancient and terribly dysfunctional family, others will be hurt in the process. Not only that . . .

There are lasting consequences to our failed plans

- The child in Hagar's womb would be the progenitor of an entire race. The angel of the Lord told her, "*I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.*" Genesis 16:10. God had a plan for the people of God to come through Abram. The plan was for them to come through Sarai. Now, here is another race who, through this unborn son, Ishmael, would experience enmity with everyone – even each other. Abram and Sarai's failed plan produced a conflict that has raged for thousands of years and has been especially and horribly evident in the past 6 weeks.
- But . . .

God redeems our failed plans

- It's plain here in his conversation with Hagar. His plan is for the children of Sarai and for the children of Hagar. Paul told the Galatians, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.* Galatians 3:28-29. Abraham's offspring are the children of Sarai AND Hagar – and anyone else who calls on the name of Jesus Christ. That has been God's plan all along, the Psalmist sang joyfully,

*All the nations you have made shall come
and worship before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.* Psalm 86:9

- God redeems our faulty plans and that is why Hagar proclaimed, El Roi! You are a God who sees!
- So, even though . . .

We don't see God, he certainly sees us

- It's in this promise we have in 1 Peter
In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you

have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:6-9

- Check the genuineness of your faith. Abram was a very righteous man and yet he dabbled in his own faulty plans and bore the heartbreak of it. We need to realize that the most stalwart saint can take the wrong turn. Last week I shared with you how Philip was a regular guy like any of us regular gals and guys. Abram was too. God uses regular people to do his will, so let's make certain of the path laid out before us and follow it. It might get rough, it might seem like God's forgotten us. It might seem like it's taking a lot longer than it should. But this is God we're talking about. He's the God who sees and he knows what he's doing. Know that Elroy is here and because of that joy is here. Amen.