

WHO GOD IS

SERIES: DOCTRINE | WEEK 4 | 9.19.2021

[Teaching today: Pastor Lee Wiggins]

Good morning, so happy to see you. Oh, what a great worship already, thank you, team. Lift up the name of our great God. Those of you online, welcome, good morning. Those of you up on the balcony all the way out there, it's good to see you. Praise God, thanks for being here this morning. Thanks for making it a priority.



We are in a series called DOCTRINE. We are studying the major doctrines of the Bible and today we get to study who God is. So I ask you this question: If you're following along in our notes, the question is listed there, the verses are listed there, you can find that at cfdowntown.com/doctrine – all the stuff going on in the series is there, all the verses are listed there. If you want to see a print out of them, they're listed there. So here's the question: When you picture God, what's the picture that comes to your mind? Would love for you to maybe even just jot that down, think about that this week. When you picture God, what do you picture? A. W. Tozer¹ wrote these words:

"The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God."

– A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

No greater than our idea of God, no greater than our picture of God, no greater than how we perceive who God is. I would hope that somehow in the next couple minutes through what I share that it might cause within each one of us a desire to pursue God, a desire to figure out God, not that we ever will. In fact, I'm just going to say to you we have limitations in this study this morning, we have infinite God and we are a finite people, it's absolutely impossible for the finite to comprehend the infinite, for the created to comprehend the Creator. Isaiah Chapter 55, verses 8 & 9 say, God says:

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

– ISAIAH 55:8-9 (ESV)

Yeah, we're not going to figure this all out. We're not going to grasp it all, and yet God becomes flesh and dwells among us. God gives us His Book to reveal Himself to us. God through His Holy Spirit draws you to Himself, that's why there's a hunger, that's why there's an interest. It's why when you look at every person across the world they've asked who is my God. They've asked how do I find Him? You find anyone they're seeking after, they're trying to figure it out, there is an interest. You see, we're going to study this, we're going to look at this because what we believe about God matters. If we get God wrong, we don't have God. You can't get God wrong and get the wrong god and think, *Well, that's god.*

What we're going to talk about today, even though I tell you hey, go to the website, download the notes, keep a track of this, do that for each of the weeks, they're all in there, the podcast from earlier this week, the video that we do every Thursday night at 9 o'clock, it's all on there. I'm hoping you're jumping into that, I'm hoping you're taking notes, I'm hoping you're creating a notebook out of this, but despite that this is not just merely material for a notebook, or for that matter, church conversation in our small groups, even though I hope you do all those things because these materials, understanding who God is,

¹ Quote from page 4 (Chapter 1, paragraph 5) of *The Knowledge of the Holy* by A. W. Tozer, online PDF copy available at <https://www.restoringthecore.com/wp-content/restored/AW-Tozer-Knowledge-of-the-Holy.pdf>

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understanding what the Bible says about who God is, is definitely the foundation for our life. How we view life, how we view God, how we view the world, all that gets sealed in by understanding this. But I want this to become more than a notebook full of notes, I want this to become a living passion of ours to know the holy true God, the one and only true God—knowing God is meant to be the north star of our lives.

I may have shared this with you before, it so connected with me that I share it all the time. I met a guy about a year ago, he said whenever he walks into a room he pulls out a compass and he lays it down on the table. Before he looks at it he points where he thinks due north is and then he looks down and looks at his compass to see where due north is. And he said, "I do it in every room I walk into." He said, "You would think I'd begin to know where due north is," but he said, "I'm always amazed how far off I am." And the point and the fact that we all understand, you know, if you're a little bit off pretty soon you're so far off. And if we're going to understand life and if we understand God for who He is, we're going to want to know Him as our true north star that lines up everything else. And so if we get God right, well, then the "GPS" of our lives that depends on due north is going to set everything else and the direction of our life in the right direction.

One verse I really, really, really want you to meditate on, if you write down one verse this might be the verse, I think I've mentioned it every week of our studies so far because I find it so helpful, Hebrews Chapter 11, verse 6. We'll pop it up on the screen right now, it says this:

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

– HEBREWS 11:6 (ESV)

You see, faith is of no use if you don't have a faithful God that you can place your trust in, that's what we are going to talk about this morning. It's absolutely crucial to everything else in your life. Get this right everything else falls in line, but if you can't be sure of your God/god, if you haven't figured that out, like, if you leave here today and you say, "Everything that pastor said about God, I don't buy that about God." I would submit to you then you better figure out who your God is. If I'm wrong and you're like convinced that I'm wrong, then I say go out there and start studying this to find out who God is.

We started out several weeks ago talking about the Bible, God's revelation to you. We talked about the natural world where God lets Himself be seen through His creation. We've talked about His Bible where He specifically reveals Himself to us. And that's why He says hey, "**without faith it's impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God.**" If you want to draw near to God, here's the foundation, here's the premise, here's where it all begins. If you want to draw near to God, you "**must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek Him.**" The Bible doesn't even attempt to prove God's existence, it assumes it.

The first verse, "**In the beginning,**" and we talked about last week God, Elohim, in the plural, Trinity, God the Father, God the son, God the Holy Spirit, "**In the beginning, God**" and it goes right in. The God who existed from all eternity at that point, "**In the beginning, God created**" – doesn't seek to prove the existence of God. Don't find a logical treatment in the Scripture of the existence of God or arguments for such, it just assumes it and it's because of the infinite character of God, it's because of the eternal nature of God. If you want to prove it you have to be able to recreate it, you have to be able to pop it into some sort of a test tube and see it happen again and do that kind of an experiment upon it. We can't create God. He



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is the uncreated One. He is the eternal One, it is not for us to do since we are the created and He is the Creator. God cannot be reduced to a scientific experiment, but even though we cannot reduce Him to a scientific experiment and He never seeks to prove that He exists, He reveals Himself to us.

And that's why we continue to say we are a people of The Book. That's why we continue as a church to revel in the fact that God draws us, that He loves us enough, the very fact that you're here today. The very fact that you're listening to this. The very fact that you're interested in trying to figure this out, that at some level is a reminder that God is drawing you to Himself. By the way, if you say, "I don't believe there's a God," the Bible has a word for that. God speaks to the atheist in Psalm 14:1 and says:



¹ To the choirmaster. Of David. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good.

– PSALM 14:1 (ESV)

The fool says there is no God. You know better, and He will give you the faith to believe. He will draw you to Himself and as you respond to Him, He will reveal Himself to you.

We've shared all the way through the series starting at the very beginning there is a place where we say, "God, I don't get it yet. I'm not sure. I have questions," and I just want you to know in this room, in this church among our communities here, it's okay to come with that posture. And what we oftentimes will say and we've said it already in this series is say to God, "God, show yourself to me. If You're real, would You make yourself known to me?" Start reading your Bible, turn to the book of John and just start reading it and say, "God, You said You'd reveal yourself, pastor said You'd reveal yourself to me, show me yourself." I am so confident in our holy God and His character and who He is, I know that He will do that if you'll just say, "Show me."

Since God says He exists, whoever wants to draw near to God must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those who seek Him, then our greatest desire should be to get to know Him. That's why we read our Bible. That's why we respond in praise. That's why when we're done here today we will praise the name of Jesus; we're going to lift up the name of our God and Savior because when we understand who God is we respond with praise and thanksgiving, and then we want to know more. Reveal yourself, and because He's an infinite God there is an infinite amount of knowledge in getting to know Him.

Someone said to me this morning, "So you gotta, like, explain God in a half hour?" I've spent hours just rewriting this sermon this week to somehow try to find a way to do that in a way that would be helpful, that would at least whet your appetite and just begin to start you on that path because this is a – I was going to say a lifelong journey. This is... when you get to know Jesus as your Savior and you're made right with God, we will spend the rest of our lives enjoying God and getting to know Him, having a relationship with Him.

Know:

1. Who I am
2. Who God is

So I'm gonna be very simple today, to get to know God as Father there's two things we need to know: (1) who I am and (2) who God is. That's our simple outline today—who I am, who God is. I'm going to spend just a moment on who I am because I have to come to a place where I realize I'm not God, which may be the hardest part of this assignment right now because I want to be in control, I want to be in charge, I want to manage my life. I think I've got this. You all think you've got this? We have bright, smart, sharp people in here and the weakness

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with that is we think we've got this – until we don't and then we cry out, "Help." So we need to know who I am and we need to know who God is. The one true God, no other god.

So let's talk about who I am just a second. I'm going to be very clear, I'm a sinner. I just got done telling us how sharp we are and how bright we are and how smart we are, how we've got this, and how we've learned things and we know things, and we can do things and we can make stuff happen, and then I have to say I'm a sinner. I'm constantly hearing this thing it's like, "Stop telling your kids that, it's giving them a low self-image." No. We have to understand this even though we recoil at this, even though we think we're basically good, I want you to hear what God says and this begins to align things. Romans 3 says this:

¹⁰ as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God.

¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

¹³ "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips."

¹⁴ "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."

¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ in their paths are ruin and misery,

¹⁷ and the way of peace they have not known."

– ROMANS 3:10-12 (ESV)

That's what we've made of our own world, and you're not sure of that because each one of us we think we're pretty good and we think we're better than just about everyone else, and we're better than those that are not getting things right. When I talk to you about our world is a mess, when I talk about the physical world is a mess, when I talk about the spiritual world is a mess, most of us agree except for somehow we can't fit ourselves into that. We're not – in our minds – part of this evil, desperate, wicked mess that our world has made ourselves, and we stand back looking down as if we are God looking at it all going, "How sad." And everyone I talked to talks about the mess the world's in, but when we talk about—"I'm a sinner," "I am separated from God," "I have failed," "I have come up short," "I have disappointed the heart of God"—when I begin to share those kinds of things then there's pushback.



Church, in order to understand God we have to understand who we are. He is God; I am not. He is in charge; I am not. He is righteous, holy, sinless; I am sinful. And when I approach holy God confessing my sin, confessing my neediness like Isaiah does, look at Isaiah 6 when you get a chance. Isaiah, when he comes into the very presence of Go, he admits who he is as he cries out three times holy, holy, holy.² I am a wicked man, I am among a people with unclean lips. We recognize, we humble ourselves along those lines. And yet despite the fact that we're sinners and we're separated from God, despite the fact that Romans Chapter 3 says none of us even seeks God... we hear a lot about churches are looking for seekers. Romans 3 says none of us are seeking God. We're so

ISAIAH 6:5 (ESV)

And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

² Transcriber edit/correction – it is not Isaiah who cries out "Holy, holy, holy," it is the seraphim (angels) calling to one another. Passage is Isaiah 6:1-4 (ESV): ¹ In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. Verse 5 contains what Isaiah stated, it is highlighted in the text box above.

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sinful that all we're seeking is ourselves. But when God seeks us He begins to draw us to Himself and call us.

I want to say it was three months ago, standing right over here in this lobby, I overheard a conversation. And if you've ever walked into our lobbies this is the most friendly place around and, I mean, you have to work hard to slip around those who are being friendly to you and once in a while someone pulls it off. But I tell you what, the friendliness is unbelievable. I just love it. And if you've received that, go give that to everyone else, you're doing great, church. It's unbelievable.

Anyhow, I overheard a conversation that was just beginning because Pastor Rob has this way of asking a question and the question that Pastor Rob asked was something along the lines of if someone asked you how to become a Christian, what would you tell them? And I overheard this couple say this back to Pastor Rob, "That's why we're here. We were having that very conversation over the last couple weeks with a couple of our friends, and we were like, 'We've got to find the answer to that question, how do we get to God?' And we drove by this church all the time, we decided to come in and see if we can find out."



Within minutes of walking in that door they had heard that the question they were asking, the thing they were seeking, God was drawing them, someone addressed it because they were faithful in responding to God and because the person was faithful in addressing it; within minutes of walking in this door seeking they had put their faith and trust in Jesus alone for their salvation. [APPLAUSE] God is drawing you and if you're sitting here today going, "I just can't figure it out, but I want to," come talk to one of us. God is drawing you. He wants to forgive you. He gave His Son Jesus to forgive you, to make you right with God.

So to understand God we need to know two things: (1) who I am, and here's the second thing, (2) who God is. The rest of my time here this morning I'm going to talk about who God is. This is the part that is just absolutely enormous. When I begin to talk about the attributes of God, what makes God God, who God is, there's no end of this. God begins to throw some things onto the pages of Scripture so that we can know Him, so He can reveal Himself to us, but we're only scratching the surface. But let's get started, why not?

ETERNAL

So start by talking about His attributes. It's important first of all to realize that God is eternal. He is the uncreated One. As I already mentioned, Genesis 1:1, God has no beginning and so when He makes that statement and He puts it there for us to accept that He has always existed. Genesis 21:33

GENESIS 21:33 (ESV)

Abraham planted . . . and called there on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God.

REVELATION 4:8 (ESV)

And the four living creatures . . . never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

REVELATION 22:13 (ESV)

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

says the eternal God. Revelation 4:8³ says who was and who is and who is to come. Revelation, the last book of the Bible, 22:13 – I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. The psalmist in Psalm 90, verse 2, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. Psalm 102 – but you, Lord, sit enthroned forever, your years never end. Deuteronomy 33:27 – the eternal God is your refuge. Isaiah 43:10 – before me no God was formed, nor will there be. God is the Creator, that makes Him the owner. You create a document,

PSALM 90:2 (ESV)

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

PSALM 102:12 (ESV)

But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever; you are remembered throughout all generations.

DEUTERONOMY 33:12-13 (ESV)

The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

ISAIAH 43:10b (ESV)

Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.

³ Transcriber edit/correction: Revelation 4:18 was erroneously stated in the sermon video, it's verse 8, not 18.

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GENESIS 1:21 (ESV)

So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.

1:27 – So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

you're the owner. You create intellectual material, you're the owner. God has created everything, He is the owner. He exists outside of time and space. Genesis 1:21 – so God created; 1:27 of Genesis – so God created human beings in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. Revelation, last book again, 4:11 – for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

REVELATION 4:11 (ESV)

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

OMNIPOTENT

One of the ones that if I asked you to name off the attributes of God that you'd be able to name off without even thinking and very quickly is the fact that God is all-powerful, *omnipotent* is the big word, but one that you know. God is all-powerful, omnipotent. I love Jeremiah 32:17:

¹⁷ "Ah, LORD GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. ¹⁸ You show steadfast love to thousands, but you repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts,"

– JEREMIAH 32:17-18 (ESV)

There's no one equal to Him in power, which causes me to ask then why is it then that I'm trying to control my own world if I have an omnipotent God? Why is it that I try to control Him and manipulate Him if He's the eternal omnipotent, all-powerful, uncreated One who created us, who has all the power? Why is it that we're struggling with the details of today and the details of this week and figuring out how to move forward when we have an all-powerful God that we can submit to? I bring these little one-liners up to you just to say this, I can talk to you about the attributes of God all day long—why do we care about these attributes of God? Because it impacts how we view our life. I mentioned to you earlier how we view God impacts everything else that we do, it creates our due north, it creates how we're going to live our life today. Right theology leads to right living; wrong theology, believe wrong about God, it's going to lead to wrong living, and so that's why we want to understand God in His fullness.

Isaiah 40:25:

²⁵ To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. ²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.

– ISAIAH 40:25-26 (ESV)

Again, our theology, what we believe about God, is going to cause us to step back and be able to worship in a greater level here in a few moments when the team comes back up because we're able to say God, You're powerful, I'm not. I worship You. I want You on my side. I want to be with You. I want to spend eternity with You. I want to know You. I want to be part of what You have.

OMNISCIENT

God's all-knowing, here's the word, *omniscient*, He knows everything. How'd He create the laws of the universe that we're still trying to figure out that we found out the stuff that we thought was true a month ago, or a year and a half ago when we found out this isn't true anymore, or we... well, we just didn't figure it out. And we didn't learn it and we don't know it and we

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still don't know it, and there's so much that we still don't know. And yet the God who put everything together, that it all holds together, created this body that's doing all this stuff right now, I can't even imagine all that it's doing, all that your bodies are doing, that I can't control, that I can't make and we can't reproduce.

All-knowing God who exists outside of anything that we know, greater than everything that we've wrapped up in our little known world. When we think of all we know we think we're so smart it's ridiculous. We're so prideful of how much we know. If we only understood how little we know and all that God knows, that we can go to Him and say, "I don't know." I mean, we get proud of each other. We say, "You know, it was neat to hear that guy say he didn't know. It was nice to know that, you know, he didn't know everything." And yet for some reason we come before the God of the universe and we want to tell Him how it works, the God that knows everything and knows stuff that we haven't even scratched the surface on. Again, we worship Him.

Isaiah 40:14:

¹⁴ Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?

– ISAIAH 40:14 (ESV)

What God knows is right, what God does is right, what God understands is right.

GOOD Let me go to another attribute: God is good. Everything He does is good, and who am I to tell Him otherwise? I love the words that He spoke to Job – where were you when I set the foundations of this world?

⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding."

– JOB 38:4 (ESV)

And yet we are so quick to go, "God, You..." Are you kidding me? God is so good. I love when we sing that song, *God, you're so good*, and there's this reminder that we have a good God. If God has done something, it is good; and anything good that we see is from God. Psalm 34, verse 8, taste and see that the Lord is good:

⁸ Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

– PSALM 34:8 (ESV)

Mark 10:18, no one is good except God alone:

¹⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."

– MARK 10:18 (ESV)

That goes back to our first understanding – understanding who I am to understand who God is. Deuteronomy 26:11:

¹¹ And you shall rejoice in all the good that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

– DEUTERONOMY 26:11 (ESV)

If you have good in your life today, it is from the very hand of God. Again, understanding who I am, it didn't come from me. I didn't do that. I think I did and I'm all puffed up because look what I produced,

look what I've accomplished, look because of my smartness and my brilliance. And God says stop it. And when we get this right and we realize everything good I have is from the hand of God and I can stop and step back and say start naming those blessings, start naming everything good in my life, and say, "THAT is from the hand of God."

FAITHFUL God is faithful, another attribute of God. Romans 3:3 Paul says what if some were unfaithful?

³ What if some were unfaithful?

— do you have any unfaithful people around you, unfaithful situations around you? Paul says this:

Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? ⁴ By no means!

– ROMANS 3:3-4a (ESV)

God's reminding you He's faithful. Even when everyone else fails you, everything else fails you, and life lets you down, governments let you down, the world around you lets you down, your work lets you down—God is faithful. And this reminder that when we understand the attributes of God, the more we get to know Him, that we can continue to lock down and claim that faithfulness so that we don't become despairing because when I know who I am—by the way, the way I am is where you are, I'm a sinner, you're a sinner, we are lost, we are desperately wicked, and we are separated from God until we meet Jesus, where I understand who I am—I begin to understand I can't trust in individuals, I can only trust in God. And a faithful God who will be there for me no matter what.

LOVE By the way, God is love. Talk about one of His attributes, 1st John 4:8:

⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

– I JOHN 4:8 (ESV)

PERSONAL We have a personal God, I think this is a really important subject, a personal God. He cares about you and He cares about the choices you make. Sometimes I think we can, and rightfully so, understand God as a holy God, so the word *holy* means "separate, other." I mean, He's so big and He's so beyond us and He's so powerful and He's so all-knowing that somehow He then becomes so far away and so separate – but He teaches us that He's a personal God, and He wants to come near and come close. And through Jesus that separation is taken away and we have this close, personal relationship with God.

By the way, this is in opposition to a thought process called *deism*, it's a false thought process. And the falseness of it is this, a deist would believe that there was a God, He created everything sort of like a watchmaker does—makes this clock, winds it up, sets it down and walks away and is completely absent—and whatever happens happens because it's just happening, and that God is completely uninvolved and does not interfere with His creation. And deists would deny the inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, miracles, supernatural acts of redemption and salvation. They deny The Trinity, the thing that we talked about last week, one God in three distinct and equal persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Deists picture God as uncaring and uninvolved. I'm here to tell you He *does* care, He *does* love you, He is involved. He is intimately involved with every aspect and every detail of your life. Will you open yourself up to receive that and accept that? And yet He allows you to make decisions. He knew what you would decide and He knew that in the midst of much of the decisions you would make that you would make the wrong decisions. And even knowing that, that even at times we would reject Him, He

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goes to incredible lengths to make that right, and He does that and there's this constant pointing in Scripture towards Jesus Christ. Second Timothy Chapter 1, verse 9, says according to His purpose and grace from all eternity:

**⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,
⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,**

– 2 TIMOTHY 1:7-9 (ESV)

In other words, He knows you, He cares about you – and He has since all eternity, and there was purpose for your life from eternity past. His grace and mercy and love to you, that He would show to you in the person of Jesus Christ that He would die on the cross, has been prepared since all of eternity. This isn't one of those things where all of a sudden we showed up and we messed it up; it happened in the garden, it's happened ever since, and God was caught flat-footed by surprises like, *Whoa! We gotta come up with a plan here!* From all of eternity He had planned this. Listen to Ephesians 1:4:

⁴ even as he chose us in him

— in Jesus —

before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

– EPHESIANS 1:4 (ESV)

He knows you, He cares for you, He loves you.

EXCLUSIVE By the way, He's an exclusive God. He is the only God, meaning that He is not the first among equals. Ten Commandments, quick little refresher, Exodus Chapter 20, verses 3 & 4—first commandment, one God, don't worship any other god; second commandment, no idols, He's an exclusive God.

³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."

– EXODUS 20:3-4 (ESV)

HIS NAMES God reveals Himself through His character, the things we've been talking about, He also shows Himself through His names and He gives these names to help us get to know Him. And when you talk about a holy God that is infinite and beyond us, He has to use names and pictures that would make sense to us to help us understand a quality or a characteristic that is very much beyond us. So when we're talking to a child we use different illustrations and metaphors than when we're talking as adults. When God tries to explain Himself to us—almighty, immortal, all-powerful God—He's going to have to find ways to get this across to us. So when He gives us His names that's what He's doing.⁴

⁴ For a list of the names of God with biblical references, go to **God Is Real** at <https://www.godisreal.today/names-of-god/> –and/or– **Got Questions** at <https://www.gotquestions.org/names-of-God.html>

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I'm gonna just give you a couple of them real quick, our time is running away from me.

YAHWEH (YHWH), the most personal name for God, it is from the verb "to be," denotes God's eternal character. When Moses asked God what name he was to use when he would speak to the Israelites Moses was told to use, "I AM." Exodus 3, verses 13 & 14:

¹³ Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I am has sent me to you.'"

– EXODUS 3:13-14 (ESV)

I AM – this is who God is, I AM. Let me give you another name, I'm just going to try to go through these quickly but there's so much, they're so rich.

EL ROI – the God who sees me. Remember Abraham and Sarah in the Old Testament of your Bible, I'm going to give you two stories about them real quick. God promises to Abraham that He's going to make him a great nation. Abraham hits about 100 years old and he realizes hey, there's no kids, we don't have any children, this is problematic and I'm 100. Anyone 100 in here today? If you are, you're probably not having any more kids. Abraham and Sarah decide we're going to fix this – have you ever tried to fix something for God? I know what God wants so I'll just do it.

And so he tries to fix it and they take their Egyptian servant Hagar and they get her pregnant and as a result of that, you know, if you have a son from that then maybe God will fulfill that. And then Sarah mistreats Hagar and Hagar is running away in the wilderness and at that point she runs into an angel of the Lord. And as she runs into this angel of the Lord, the angel of the Lord says to her she'll have a son and that son will form a great nation and shall have many descendants. That's Ishmael.

¹¹ And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has listened to your affliction."

– GENESIS 16:11 (ESV)

And because God saw her when no one else did Hagar looked out and she said these words:

¹³ So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."

– GENESIS 16:13 (ESV)

She realized that God sees her.

Same couple, the couple that tried to make things work with God, God's a gracious, forgiving God, even though they went the wrong way and there are ramifications that last to the day, study that on this subject.

Another name is **JEHOVAH JIREH** which means "God, You are provider." Genesis 22, God has given Abraham a son, his name is Isaac, this is the son of promise. This is the one he'd been waiting for and he loves that boy, he's been waiting for all of his life, but he loves God, too. And God comes and asks him to do the unthinkable, He says to him I want you to go and I want you to take that boy and offer him as a sacrifice on the altar.

² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

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– GENESIS 22:2 (ESV)

And the Bible's fascinating what it says there in Genesis Chapter 22, it says the next morning he gets up and He goes and prepares and heads up to the mountain to do that very thing.

³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

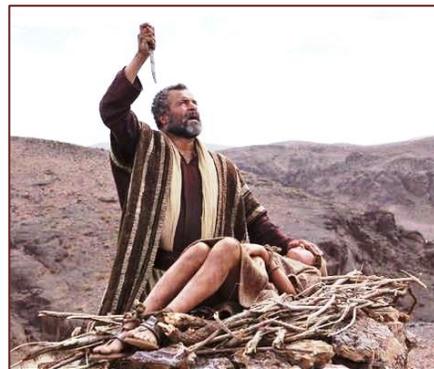
— and when he gets the boy on that altar:

⁹ When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.

— God provides a ram in the thicket and says, no, take that ram and put him on the altar, take your boy off. I wanted to see where you're at, I wanted to see what was most important to you.

¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."

¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.



— and in Genesis 22:14 it says:

¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

– GENESIS 22:3, 9-14 (ESV)

Anyone in a spot this morning where you need to be able to call out on the God whose name is Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides? Any of you in this room today who need to call on the name of the God who sees, El Roi? *O God, You're the God that sees me, I feel invisible. I'm alone in this room, my spouse won't come with me. I don't have a spouse anymore. I've never had a spouse. I'm single, I'm sitting here alone, it's as if I'm invisible. You're the God who sees me. People are mistreating me and no one seems to notice. Everyone's all about justice until it comes to me. No one sees me. O God, You're the God who sees. I don't have what I need to make it through the day; You haven't provided your promises – and then He does. And you call out to the God who provides, Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides.*

I want to go to one more name and I believe this is super important as we wrap up this morning, God as **FATHER**. In the Old Testament He was referred to as Father 13 times. Jesus referred to God as Father over 150 times in the New Testament, and He really shocked everyone when He referred to God over 30 times in the New Testament as *our* Father. These are not light words, these are words that Jesus introduced – our Father. John Chapter 5, verse 18, says when He said that the Jews became infuriated and set out to kill Him. Why? Because they knew when He said our Father He was making Himself out to be God.

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¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, **"My Father is working until now, and I am working."**

¹⁸ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

– JOHN 5:17-18 (ESV)

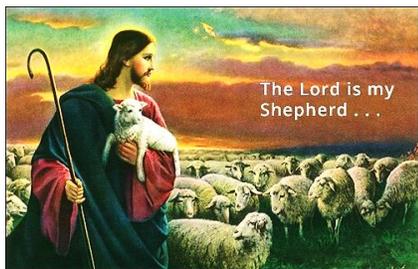
In Galatians Chapter 4, verse 4, He talks about those who are saved through Jesus, those who have put their trust in Jesus, and He says because of that we're made right with God and God sees us as sons, which makes God our Father so that we have a very personal relationship with God.

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

– GALATIANS 4:4-5 (ESV)

Here's where this gets a little bit difficult. Most of us in this room have some sort of an experience with our earthly father and that experience with our earthly father has very much impacted how we view our experience with God. If you had an earthly father that never existed, it's very hard for you to understand a Heavenly Father. Maybe he was absent for some reason. It's very hard for you to grasp that. If you had an earthly father who showed up and disappeared and was gone for long periods of time, it's hard for you to have a personal Father who sees you, who knows you, who is all-powerful. If you had an earthly father that wasn't there to protect you in your times of need, it is very hard for you to understand a Heavenly Father that is there to protect you.

One of the names for God was **SHEPHERD**, He is our Shepherd. For those of you who didn't have an earthly father who shepherded you along, it's hard for you understand. You had an earthly Father that was sharp, who was angry, then you may very well see your Heavenly Father as sharp or angry. And I want to remind you today you need to get to know God for who *He* is. He is the perfect Father. I'm sorry, those of us who are fathers here on this earth – we're not perfect fathers and we give an imperfect view of who the true Father is.



By the way though, you Christian daddies in this room, the way you father will help form a picture in your kids' hearts and minds of what the Father is like. Your kids need you, don't just blow it off because you're beginning to form and help them understand who God the

Father is by how you live your life. You know that if you don't have a father here on this earth, it's not a healthy place to be, and you know people who don't have a daddy. There's some of you people in this room right now that are really cool because you've become a father for someone that doesn't have a daddy, you've stepped into that spot. There's all sorts of reasons why people don't have daddies, even like good reasons, and you've stepped into that spot because you know it's not healthy not to have a father.

So when the Bible talks about God as Father, when Jesus refers to God as Father, He's saying a shocking, powerful thing to each one of us. He's introducing something to us, *Our Father*. When we pray those words, as Jesus says, *When you pray, pray like this, Our Father*, this isn't just a little phrase that drops off of our lips but we're talking to our Father who loves us, who comes close to us.

² So He said to them, "When you pray, say:

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.**

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**Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.**

– LUKE 11:2 (NKJV)

I'll tell you what, when I became a father it helped me understand a lot about God the Father. In that moment, I'd always wanted a boy, I couldn't wait to show him things, I couldn't wait to teach him things, I couldn't wait to do things with him, I couldn't wait to give him things, I couldn't wait to train him, take him places, give him experiences. And even now that he's an adult, I was upstairs yesterday, he was out in the driveway, he calls me up says, "Dad, car failed inspection, needs a tail light, can you come help me? It's a bunch of plastic, I'm afraid I'm gonna bust it trying to change out the light." I was busy. I dropped everything and I dashed to the driveway and it was the greatest joy in the world to help my son. And when I begin to think about that I'm reminded that God the Father, He loves you so much, and it begins to remind us who God really is—you have a Father who loves you.

My time is up and I'm so upset about that.

Galatians 4:4 says this, crying out *Abba! Father!* He says you're sons and you're crying out *Abba! Father!*

⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

– GALATIANS 4:6 (ESV)

That word *Abba* is in the Aramaic and it's the personal relationship of a daddy to his son. When you cry out, "Abba! Father!" you're saying "Daddy!" I said that not too long ago and a guy came up to me afterwards, he said, "I thought that was really goofy when you said that daddy about God." We began to talk and I realized he didn't have a daddy and so for him this was very foreign. We come before our God as Daddy and we can pray to Him, we can be there with Him.

I hesitate and wasn't sure whether to share this, but I feel like I want to share it. For many of you in this room and maybe some of you watching on, this has been a difficult week for our church because a young mother of two, a wife, passed away of cancer this week and I had the opportunity to walk with the family to an extent this week. And I was there when the father had to share with his children that their mommy had gone home to be with Jesus. I have to tell you I think it was probably the hardest thing this father ever had to do. I think every one of us was dreading this moment, and as I look back on that moment this week I realized for me it was a sacred moment because this father did an absolutely amazing job at talking to his son and his daughter.

And what I observed as that took place, his two little children crawling up on his lap and burying their heads in his chest and crying and sobbing, and when they were done crying and sobbing, the son would lean out and say, "But daddy," and ask him a question. His daddy was patient and answered the question in terms that this young, young boy would understand and then he cried some more and put his head in his daddy's chest. And then he'd lean out and ask another question, and this went on for a couple hours. And I was reminded of our God who loves, loves, loves us and invites us to be near, who we can cry out to and say, "Abba! Father!" He wants to be near. He wants you to be able to cry. He wants to be able to answer your questions.



So I'm going to invite the team to come up right now. I want to end by praying a prayer that Jesus said to

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pray, it's the prayer that begins with *Our Father*, and I'm going to invite you to stand up right now. We're going to put that prayer up on the screen and my hope is that as we pray, as Jesus taught us to pray with the words *Our Father*, that we'll say those words *Our Father* in something less than a formulaic way right now, but that we'll lift our voices up to our Father, our Daddy, Abba! Father! So I'm going to just ask you, can we all just say this together? I'll lead us in, our Father in Heaven, say it with me:

**"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil."**



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