

All right, everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. We are so glad you are here with us today. We've been in a series called Yahweh: The Lord Your God. We're just taking some time to just talk about who God is and what He is like. We're turning our attention and our focus and our affection to Him. We're learning to think on God and think on Him rightly. What we're discovering is that God is better than we think. That God is bigger than we think. We're discovering that He has revealed Himself to us, that He wants to reveal Himself to us, that discovering God isn't all that hard.

We just have to seek after Him with all our heart. God is ready and waiting to reveal Himself to those who long to know Him. For the last couple of weeks, I've just been telling you, Yahweh, it's the name of God. We said we'll get there. Well, today's the day we're going to get there. We're going to talk about, what is Yahweh, and what is His name and what does it look like? Here's what I want you to do. This is a big message today. I would encourage you today, to not take notes. There's a lot that we're going to go through. All this will be on ValleyCreek+ later. You can download it. I think we're going to walk through some things that might challenge your thinking or might stretch your thinking. I would much rather you just listen and try to let God do whatever He wants to do in your life, okay. Let's see if we can do this together. Holy Spirit, we need you. Would you open up our eyes and open up our ears, reveal yourself to us.

Exodus 3, after 400 years of Egyptian slavery, God sees the misery of His people. He's heard their cries, He's concerned of their suffering. He has come and He has decided to raise up a deliverer. At this time, Moses is a murderer. He's a washed up shepherd on the backside of the desert. One day while He's out shepherding sheep off in the distance, He sees a bush and it's burning. Even though it's burning, it doesn't burn up. He goes over to check this thing out. It's the presence of God. One of the interesting things that you'll note all throughout the Bible is God often reveals Himself to people through things like fire and wind and cloud, representing energy, His power, His life. As Moses gets close, God speaks to him, and He says, "Moses, stop, do not come any closer. The place you are standing is holy ground." Now for years, I always thought that the holiness of God created a distance between us and God, but what God's holiness does is it actually draws us in.

See, He tells Moses to take off his sandals. Taking off his sandals is a sign of respect and humility and reverence. God doesn't want there to be any distance between Moses and God. The sandals; the ground is holy because God's there. God wants to be close to Moses. It's holiness that creates humility and humility that leads us to grace. God opposes the proud. He gives grace to the humble. When we're humble and before the holiness of God, He draws us in and pulls us close. He tells Moses, "Moses, I've seen the misery of my people. I've heard their cries. I'm concerned of their suffering. Now, go, I am sending you to set them free." Moses responds like every one of us would respond, like, "Who am I, Lord? Who am I? I can't go do that. I don't know how to do that. You've got to send someone else. Who am I? I can't go." God doesn't really answer the question when Moses says, "Who am I?" He says, "I will be with you."

He doesn't give Moses this big list of why Moses is so qualified and gifted and talented. No, He just says, "Moses, you want to know what qualifies you to go? It's Me. You want to know who you are? You're the one whom God is with. What qualifies you to go is that I will be with you; My presence in your life." You see, every time God asks you to do something like be a Hope Carrier or make a disciple or take a step of faith, and we say, "Who am I? I can't do that. God, who am I to do this?" He doesn't respond by telling you how amazing and gifted and talented you are. He just says, "But I will be with you. You know what qualifies you to go right now in this moment is Me. You are the one whom I am with." Now, here's where it gets interesting. "Moses says to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you and they ask me, 'What is His name?' Then what shall I tell them?'

God said to Moses, 'I Am who I am (Ehyeh). This is what you are to say to the Israelites. I Am (Ehyeh) has sent me to you.' God also said to Moses, 'Say to the Israelites, the Lord (Yahweh), the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob has sent me to you. This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.'" Moses says, "Okay, God, I'll go, but like, what am I supposed to say? Like, who are You? What God is sending me to go set them free?" Fair question. God tells us His name: I Am (Ehyeh). I Am (Ehyeh). When God says His name, it's "I Am," or "Ehyeh." But, when we say His name, it's "the Lord" or "Yahweh." "I Am" is first person, "Yahweh" is third person.

When God says His name, it's "I Am." When we say His name, it's "the Lord." First person versus third person. Does that make sense? I am the Lord (Yahweh), which simply means He is. When God says His name, it's "I Am." When we say His name, it's "He is." What we discover is that God has a name. He's a person, and He's close, and He wants to be closer still. He tells us that His name is "I Am." Just stop and think about the gravity of that name, that declaration, "I Am is My name." In other words, He is the only self-sufficient, self-existent, eternal, immortal, and infinite one who has life in Himself. God is the only one, in all of creation, that has life in Himself. Every other living thing, plants, animals, fish, humans, spiritual beings, we all need to draw something else into ourselves to have life.

Only God has life in and of Himself; the self-existent, self-sufficient one. We know that God is Spirit, which means He is an un-bodied, personal power with the ability to think, act, and will. He's a Spirit. He doesn't have a body, but He's a personal power and He thinks, He acts, He has a will, He has a heart, He's a person, which means He has relationship. I Am. I Am, which means He has no beginning and no end. I Am, which means He always has been and He always will be. I Am means He was, He is, and He will be. I Am, which means everything that has been created has been created by Him.

I Am. He doesn't depend on anyone or anything for anything, but everyone and everything depends on Him for everything. I Am. There is no space in all of creation that He does not fill;

there is no answer that He does not know; there is no place that He cannot go. Whatever He does is good, is true, it is right. He is the definition of wisdom and love and life itself. He is the only one who is truly free. There are no limitations upon I Am. The only limitations He has are those He sets upon Himself. He is all-knowing, all-powerful and ever-present. If He is the I Am, that means He doesn't grow or morph or change. Whatever He is, He is always that. Because He is grace, He is always grace. Because He is just, He is always just. Because He is love, He is always love. Because He is compassionate, He is always compassionate. I Am. He may not be what you want Him to be, but He is always exactly what you need Him to be.

This is the I Am. See, God isn't always what you want Him to be, and we know this. Because maybe you didn't get the promotion or He didn't do this thing or He didn't respond the way that you wanted Him to respond. He's not always what you want Him to be, but He is exactly who you need Him to be. When you discover that He is who you need Him to be, you realize He is exactly who you want Him to be. I Am, the God of your fathers, the God of the past, and the God of your children. I Am the God of the future. I Am. Make sense? I Am. When He says it, first person. When we say it, Yahweh. I Am/He is. Same thing, root word in the Hebrew. You with me on this? Now, fast forward a little bit. God says, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob as God Almighty," or El-Shaddai in the original language, "but by my name, the Lord (Yahweh), I did not make myself known to them." You're just going, God has a name. He's not transcended somewhere way off in the universe that we have no access to.

No, He wants to be in relationship with you. But catch it, He appeared to amazing people before this moment. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and yet He did not tell them His name. There is a profound depth and revelation and connection and intimacy that comes when God tells us His name. Even Abraham didn't know the name of God, but you do. Fast forward a little bit further. Moses says to God, "God, show me Your glory. I want to see Your glory." God says, "Okay, I will proclaim My name, the Lord (Yahweh) in your presence." In other words, when Moses asked God to show him His glory, God responds by saying, "I will proclaim My name in your presence..." In other words, the name of God contains the glory of God. I Am/He is. "Then the Lord (Yahweh) came down in a cloud and stood there with Him and proclaimed His name, the Lord (Yahweh)."

"He passed in front of Moses proclaiming, the Lord (Yahweh), the Lord (Yahweh), the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin." Moses wants to see the glory of God. God says, "Okay, I'll proclaim My name." "My name," you see, contained in the name of God is the identity, the character, the nature, the destiny, the personhood of who God is. When He proclaims His name, it's not just a word or a thought or just this vocabulary thing. It literally, the name of God brings with it all the reality of God. The name of God is the personhood, the power and the presence of God. When He says "Yahweh, Yahweh," He is saying, "My name means compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness and forgiving."

"This is who I Am." Names bring with it a character, an identity, a personhood, a nature. When we use the name of God, it brings with it all of the reality of God. It is the personhood, the power and the presence of God when we simply say His name. We kind of get this a little bit. We kind of understand that a name brings with it the reality of the person. If I say the name Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Mother Teresa, or Nelson Mandela, I don't have to do or say anything else than say that name. When I say one of those names, it brings with it all of the reality of who that person is, doesn't it? It shows you the character and the nature and who they are and what they're like.

You see, it's so important that God tells us His name because we so often just refer to Him as the Lord, like a title or a position. But if it's just the Lord, that creates distance. If we use the thing – the doctor, the principal, the president – we can know who we're talking about, but it creates a distance, doesn't it? But, if I say Kim or Norm or Joe... just making sure you're tracking. It instantly created relationship. It creates intimacy. It creates a sense of connection. Like, for some of you, you look at me and you would call me the pastor or the leader. That would be pretty weird though if my kids called me the pastor or the leader. That would be pretty weird though if my kids called me the pastor, the leader, or the dad, or if Colleen called me the husband, right. No, my name is Johnny.

People that really know me know my name is Johnny, and when they say that name, it brings with it the reality of who I am; my character, my nature, my personhood, who I am, what I am like. This is why Proverbs tells us, "A good name is more desirable than great riches," because it's not just a name, a vocabulary word or a reputation. When we say your name, it brings with it all of the reality of who you are. This is why the name of God is so big all throughout the Bible. We say things like, "We trust in the name of the Lord." What does that mean? Just a vocabulary word? No, when we trust in the name of the Lord, it brings with it the reality of the Lord into that moment. When we say, "There is no other name under heaven by which men might be saved," what are we saying? We're saying that name, the name of Jesus, brings with it His personhood and His power and His presence. When we say baptized people "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," are we just doing a religious goobly-goo?

No, we're immersing you into the reality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When we say "there is no other--" or, "Jesus is the name above all names," what we're saying is His reality is greater than any other reality in the universe. When we pray "in the name of Jesus," we're praying in the reality of God in that moment because we've used His name, which is His personhood, which is His power, and which is His presence. His name is so much bigger than a vocabulary construct. It brings with it all the reality of God. That's why the name of God is such a big deal. We watch as we go through Scripture and we start seeing this unfolding nature of who God is. The first thing is just Elohim, God. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Just simply means ruler and judge. It's a title. Then we see El-Shaddai, God Almighty, like, "He is the God of all gods, or He is the king of all gods." Again, title, position.

Then we see Adonai, which literally means Lord; like master, title, position. But, then, we get Yahweh, the name of God, the I Am, the He is. All of a sudden, it's not the doctor, the principal, the president. It's Yahweh. You see, in the original language, when Hebrews would write, they would write without vowels. Yahweh, in the original language in Hebrew, is just Y-H-W-H, Yahweh. Now, the name was so sacred to them, and such a big deal, it had such a reverence and an awe and a respect for God, that they didn't say it out loud. They wouldn't say the name of Yahweh. When they were reading through the Scriptures and they would get to Y-H-W-H, sometimes they would say nothing. Sometimes they would just say "the name." Think of the respect and the awe of God. "The name."

Then, over time, they started using the word "Adonai," which simply meant "Lord," because they didn't want to misuse the name of God. This is how much reverence and respect they had. Over time, as they kept writing it down, eventually what they did is they took the vowels of Adonai and the consonants of Yahweh, and they put it together to Y-H-W-H. Now, no one would ever say the word Y-H-W-H, because when they got to it, they realized it wasn't a word. It was a mishmash of two words together to remind them of the gravity and the reverence and the fear of the Lord. But, what happened over time is as translators kept coming through Y-H-W-H, they didn't understand that, that wasn't actually a word, so this is where the word Jehovah came from, Y-H-O-V-A. The Y is a J, the W sounds like a V, Jehovah. Jehovah is actually not a word in the original language. It's a mix between Yahweh and Adonai as a way of such respect and reverence and awe of God that they didn't even want to speak it out loud.

That's a reverence for God. You see, this is why every time in your Bible, it says, "The LORD" small, but capital O-R-D, it's not just Master Adonai, God somewhere in here, it's Yahweh (I am/He is). It's His name. When you read this, it's not just the principal, the doctor, the president. The Lord, it's Yahweh (I am/He is). One who wants to be known by you, the self-sufficient, self-existent, one who has life in Himself. He's told you His name. Now, are you confused yet? Okay. You say, why does all that matter? Well, that really matters because there isn't just God, there are lots of lowercase "gods."

It was so important for God to tell the Israelites that His name was Yahweh, so they wouldn't confuse Him with any other lowercase "gods." Elohim simply means God or gods. Elohim, the word in the original language, it can mean God, like, "In the beginning, God..." talking about God, or it can mean "gods," lowercase-g, spiritual beings with a power and ability to think and to act and to will. Now, if it stresses you out to hear that there are other gods, think powers, principalities, rulers, authorities, demons, angels. It doesn't really matter what word you want to give it to. Elohim can mean God, or it can mean lowercase "gods." Now, the moment I say that to you, most of you, in this room right now, you're struggling with that concept because we live in the Western physical world.

We are rational people that live by logic and understanding and reason. We're all about what we can taste, see, smell, and touch, and we think the physical is superior to the spiritual. But, do you realize most other civilizations throughout most of history believed the spiritual was far superior to the physical? This is why Jesus even says, "Pray, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." He's saying the spiritual is superior to the physical. Or when Paul says, "Fix your eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary, what is unseen is eternal." He's saying, "Hey, the spiritual is far superior to the physical." But, in our logical reasoning, Western mindset, we believe everything we can see, smell, taste, and touch has the superior reality to it. But, that's just not what the Bible teaches.

I mean, have you ever been to a place like India or Pakistan or somewhere in Asia or in Africa where there are temples and idols and shrines? If you've ever been to one of those places, you know what I'm talking about here. I traveled all the way through Pakistan, from the north of the country all the way down to the south of the country. You go through these places that have these temples and these shrines and these idols, and you literally, you just get into the area where they are and you can feel it. The hair on your arm stands up, the hair on the back of your neck stands up. You can feel the energy and the charge in the atmosphere and you say, what is that? It's an Elohim. It's a lowercase "god," power, principality, ruler, ruling and reigning in that space through human agreement. There are humans who have come into agreement with a spiritual being and given it authority and have chosen to worship it. That thing has power and authority in that place. I mean, think about things like this, pornography, the LGBTQ movement, abortion, the love of money.

You're telling me there aren't elohims, lowercase "gods" behind all of that? How about this, the world religions, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, what do you think those are? Just worldviews? All roads lead to the same God, they just use different name than we use? It just happened to be where they were born? That's all; those are elohim, those are "gods" ruling and reigning primarily through ideas and images, through human agreement. Does that make sense so far? Let me just walk you through a run of verses because some of you are like, 'This guy has lost it.' Just hang with me, okay. "I will bring judgment on all the gods (elohim) of Egypt. I am the Lord (Yahweh)." When God sets the people free after He has told them His name, He goes and He brings the 10 plagues on Egypt. Here's what I want you to notice.

It is not a judgement on the people, it's a judgement on the "gods" (elohim) of Egypt. It's like God saying there are "gods," and there is Yahweh. Every one of the 10 plagues was directly against one of the Egyptian gods. Amun-Ra, he was their sun God, so when God brings darkness for three days, He's like, "Let's be clear on who the real one is." Osiris, that was their God of life, when God brings the plague of death. There are gods, there is Yahweh. Or how about this, "Who among the gods (elohim) is like you, O Lord (Yahweh)? Who is like you – majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working in wonders?" There are gods, and there is Yahweh. There are elohims, and there is the He is, the great I Am. Or how about this, "Among

the gods (elohim), there is none like you, O Lord (Yahweh), nor are there any works like your works."

There are elohim, and there is Yahweh, and there is none like Yahweh that can even remotely do what He does. Or how about this, "For the Lord (Yahweh) is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all the gods (elohim)." There are gods, and there is the Lord. There is elohim, and there is Yahweh. Yahweh is the uncreated, self-existent one who has life in Himself. All the gods, the elohims, have been created. They've been made. They do not exist in and of themselves. He's better than all of them. But they're real. How about this, "But for 21 days," Daniel's praying, and an angel is coming in response to His prayers. "For 21 days, the mighty evil spirit who overrules the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the top officers of the heavenly realm," God's side, "came to help me so that I was able to break through these spirit rulers of Persia."

Catch it; elohims who rule over a physical place. Persia was a real place. It's like a physical place. It would be like the evil spirit who overrules Hollywood, Silicon Valley, Washington, D.C. It makes a lot more sense when we put it in our context, doesn't it? But, there it's clear that there are spiritual rulers, powers, authorities. How about this one? "God (Elohim)," Yahweh, "has taken His place in the Divine Council in the midst of the gods (elohim) and He holds judgment." God has a Divine Council. He has a divine assembly. Think of a throne room. Think of a giant courtroom of a king. He calls all the gods to the Divine Council, to the assembly, to judge them. "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?"

This is God talking to the "gods." "Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked..." God, "I said, 'You are gods (elohim), sons of the most high, all of you, nevertheless, like men, you shall die.'" God holds court and He calls all the elohim in for a count and He says, "You've been wreaking havoc on the earth. You are the creators of the works of darkness, not Me. Since I created you and I made you, I will judge you and hold you account, and your reign is over." That's profound. Now, some of you are thinking, that's the Old Testament though, so all that doesn't count, right. It's the Old Testament. I'm glad you said, brought that up. Let's look at the New Testament.

"For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many 'gods' (elohims) and many 'lords' (elohims)), yet for us there is but one God, the Father from whom all things came and for whom we live." There are elohim. Paul, saying, they're gods, powers, principalities, rulers. Or how about, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood," it's not about the physical, "but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." It's not about here. It's about here. There are real elohim, rulers, powers, principalities, demons, angels, all of it. It's very real. Or how about one more? Oh, two more. Talking about Satan, "The god of this age..." the Bible calls Satan "the god of this age," but lowercase-g, elohim. He's not Yahweh.

He is inferior in every way. He is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of the disobedient."

This is the one more, but Jesus, "having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." Jesus, on the cross, disarmed the powers and authorities, the elohim, the rulers of this age. Their time is short. All authority on heaven and earth has been given unto Him. He is the one. This is a great reminder, again, of He is disarming the works of darkness, not doing the works of darkness. This gives us context when we read the Bible and we see things like, how does Pharaoh's magicians do counterfeit miracles? Elohim. How is Saul oppressed by an evil spirit? Elohim. How is the demoniac filled with a legion of demons? Elohim. How does the antichrist move in counterfeit miracles? Elohim.

There is a real battle. It is real. You don't have to be afraid of it. You don't have to be stressed out about it. They have no authority over your will. They are only empowered through human agreement, which is what we've been trying to talk about for years, but this is really important to understand. I know some of you are sitting here, and you're like, "Okay, I've got a lot of questions." Me too, and the Bible doesn't answer them all. In fact, it doesn't answer most of them. But, it makes it very clear that there are elohim, gods, and it tells us very clearly what we should do. Fix our thoughts on Jesus. Don't focus on them. Don't fascinate over them. Don't chase them. Don't try to name them. Don't try to pursue them, but don't be ignorant and pretend that it's not there. Take every thought captive and make it obedient to Jesus. Does this make sense? The reason this all mattered, you're like, "Okay, this is a lot." See, you shouldn't have taken notes. It's a lot. Here's why this matters.

Because God is bringing them out of a polytheistic society into another polytheistic society. He's taking them out of a people with a pantheon of gods into another place with another pantheon of gods. The Egyptians had many gods. In the land of Canaan, there is Dagon and Baal and Ashtoreth and Molech, many gods. He says, "I am the Lord (Yahweh) your Elohim." "There are many Elohim, but I am your Elohim." I Am/He is. I'm the one that's "brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." He's like, "You live in a spiritual world and there are elohims everywhere looking for your attention and your affection and your focus. Don't forget that I am Yahweh, your Elohim." This is the beginning of the Ten Commandments.

If we understand this concept of Elohim in the name of God, all of a sudden, the Ten Commandments feel so different and they make so much more sense. Like, look at just the first three Ten Commandments, of the Ten Commandments with me. Like, the first one is, "You shall have no other gods (elohim) before me." If there are no other elohims that are true and exist and are real, why would it say this? Most of us have read this for years and just think fake gods, false gods, imaginary gods. That's not what it says. It says, "You shall have no other elohim before me," implying that there are a lot of elohims out there. Made by God, but they are not Yahweh. See, the problem with Egypt was not that they rejected God, it's that they had Yahweh



and other elohims. It was never that they were like, "We don't believe in Yahweh, we don't want Yahweh, we don't like Yahweh." It was always Yahweh and another elohim.

They would bring other gods into the mix, and this was the problem. In fact, think of King Solomon, "As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his hearts after other gods (elohim), and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord (Yahweh), his God (Elohim)... he followed Ashtoreth the goddess (elohim) of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god (elohim) of the Ammonites." This is Solomon. I Am appears to him twice. He rules Israel. He walks with God. Why is this person who ever lives and yet at the end of his life, it doesn't say he rejects God and doesn't believe in Yahweh, it just says he is not fully devoted to Yahweh. Yahweh and a goddess; Yahweh and Molech. He starts pulling in other elohims. Isn't this our problem? The "Jesus and..."?

It's like, "I love Jesus, but Jesus and I do sexuality my way." "Jesus and I do money my way." "Jesus and time; it's my time, I use it how I want." "Jesus and comfort; my life is about my comfort." Okay, just so you catch it, then it's Jesus and an elohim. If I do sex my way, then just so you are clear, you're then worshiping the god of sex. If it's Jesus and money and I don't tithe, and I pursue money and I love money and it's all about my money, Jesus calls the love of money the spirit of Mammon. It's one of the few He names. He's like, there's an elohim behind that. You can do money all you want and say you love Jesus the way you want, but just understand you've brought an elohim into the equation. Jesus and my time, it's my time, it's my life, I do what I want with it. Okay, you're worshiping the God of time. Or Jesus and comfort; I can't do anything, this is uncomfortable, no, no, no.

Okay, you're worshiping the God of comfort. You are a slave to whomever you obey. Are you obeying the right God? See, Satan never tries to convince you that God doesn't exist. This is actually fascinating. I think a lot of us think that Satan's main ploy is to get us to think that God isn't real. No, actually, Satan's main ploy is to think that God is holding out on you, that there's another elohim who can meet that need. He comes into the Garden. He doesn't say to Adam and Eve, "That guy's not real." He says, "Hey, He's holding out on you. If you'd eat from that tree, you'd become like Him. He is not good. He's not good to you, but I'll be good to you." Isn't this the great temptation of "Yahweh and ..."?

At the root of every temptation in your life is the questioning the goodness of God and this belief that there is an elohim, something else, that can meet that need and give me what I want. You with me on that? Second Commandment, just this, "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them for I, the Lord (Yahweh) your God (Elohim), am a jealous God." He says, "Don't make an idol." What's an idol? It's a memento, a statue, an idol, a physical thing that's been created to represent a spiritual reality. He says, don't make any idols. Why? Because no created thing can ever represent the uncreated one. This is why.

No created thing, made by a created being, can ever represent the uncreated one. Catch the paradoxical irony in that.

"I am a created being and I'm going to make a golden calf and say, 'My God.'" That's lunacy. In fact, the only thing that can represent the uncreated one is Jesus, the image of the invisible God. Only the uncreated one can represent the uncreated one. But, the problem is we make idols because we have these things in our lives and when we have an idol, all of a sudden we have this sense of control, of manipulation, of like power, of understanding. I can understand this thing that's physically right in front of me. You say, "Well, I don't have any idols. I don't go to like any temples." Okay, but an idol can be your car, your trophies. It can be your money. It could be your children. It can be your body. It can be your social media profile. The temple you worship at could be in the stadium. It could be at the mall. It could be online shopping. It could be in the Internet. It could be at work.

It could be at school. Whatever has the attention, the affection, and the motion, and the emotional reality of your life is what you worship. Here's the problem, we say, "That's just a physical thing. It's no big deal." You're right, but once you start worshipping an inanimate physical thing, you open a door for an elohim to come in behind it. Why? Because all my worship is supposed to go to Yahweh. The moment I worship a physical created thing, I've just opened the door for an elohim, a spiritual power, principality, ruler, whatever word you want to give to it, to come in, and then what? Then, it starts, through this thing, giving me pleasure, a sense of power, a sense of purpose and prosperity. Now, I double down on this thing, and I've just given that elohim access to my life. Listen to me, you worship for one of two reasons. You either worship something because it's worthy or because it promises to give you what you want.

The only two reasons you worship. You worship something because it's worthy of your worship or because it promises to give you something you want. We worship Yahweh because He's worthy. We worship our idols because they promise to give us something we want. Do you have any idols in your life that are opening the door to some things maybe you don't want? Then, the Third Commandment is, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord (Yahweh) your God, for the Lord (Yahweh) will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name." We read this and we're like, okay, like maybe you've heard it, "Don't take the Lord's name in vain;" "Do not misuse the name of the Lord." Why? Because the name of God is a big deal. The name of God brings with it the reality of God. It's His personhood, His power and His presence. We think it's just cursing. Okay.

Anytime you use the name Jesus Christ in a way that's not talking about His goodness, His grace, His salvation, that's misusing the name of God. Okay, anytime you ask God to damn something, "God... damn... it." What am I doing? I'm taking God and I'm invoking His name, asking Him to damn something. What does it mean to damn something? It comes from the word condemnation. To condemn something is to accuse it, find it guilty and worthy of

punishment. When I say that, what I'm doing is I'm saying, "God, would you come and would you accuse this thing, this person, this situation, this animal, this tool, this circumstance, this weather pattern, this moment in time, would you accuse it, find it guilty and worthy of punishment?"

But, we know that Jesus didn't come to condemn the world but to save the world, so I'm misusing the name of God. Now, that's the easy one. I think most of us misuse the name of God when we attribute the works of darkness to God's name. We say things like this, "God isn't good." "God isn't good to me." "God didn't show up." "God didn't move." "God didn't care." "Jesus doesn't know." "The Holy Spirit didn't see." "I'm offended at God." "God didn't do what I wanted." That's how we misuse the name of God because none of those things are accurate of the reality of God that, that name just brought with it. That's heavy. I think there might be some room for a lot of repentance in a lot of our lives.

Just a couple weeks ago in my life, we were having a gathering here and a bunch of things happened before it and we were really expecting God to move. I was sitting with our pastors. I just literally said, "This is going to be impossible now." I was so frustrated. I was so angry at what was happening. "This is going to be impossible." One of our pastors just looked back across the table at me, and he said, "I reject that. With God, everything is possible." The Lord woke me up this week as I've been working on this message at 2 in the morning, to say, "Hey, remember that moment? Yeah, you misused My name there because you attached an impossibility to My reality." That's what it means to misuse the name of Yahweh, not just cursing. It's bringing His name down to anything that doesn't represent or accurately reflect who He is. This is why Jesus tells us when we pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

Ha. He starts by saying, "Pray." That we would have an accurate view of Your name, that we would lift up Your name, that we would honor Your name, that we would respect Your name, that we would think of Your name and think of Your name rightly, because when we declare Your name rightly, it brings with it the reality of God and everything begins to change. I mean, you realize the most slandered person in the church is Yahweh. The most gossiped-about person in the church is Yahweh, because we attach His name to all kinds of things that He didn't do, that isn't His character, that isn't His nature. The name. The name, the I Am, the self-sufficient, self-existent, one who has life in Himself. The reason this matters is because, "I am the Lord (Yahweh), your God (Elohim)." So many people say they believe in God, that they're spiritual. Great!

Here's the question, which God do you believe in? What spirit do you follow? We've got to be real clear that He is the Lord (Yahweh), my God. I only have one Elohim in my life because there is only one Yahweh, the God, the creator, the ruler of all things. Now, some of you, you're sitting here, and you're like, "Okay, wow, that was a lot, but I'm really confused because last week you said that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, that Jesus shows us what God is

like. Is it like Yahweh, the Old Testament angry dad, and Jesus is the New Testament nice one?" No! Yahweh is Jesus and Jesus is Yahweh. Jesus is simply Yahweh in the flesh. Look at this. "In the beginning was the Word," Jesus, "and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him, all things were made. Without Him, nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life and that life was the light of men... the Word," Jesus, "became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only."

Do you see it? Do you see the I Am in it? Do you see the language, "In the beginning was the Word," Jesus. He has no beginning and no end; the alpha and the omega; who was, who is, and who will be. He was God, He is God. Through Him, all things were made. All things were created through Him. Nothing exists outside of Him. There is no space where He is not present. All things, including all elohims, were made through Him. He is superior in every way. In Him was life, only He has life in and of Himself. Jesus became Yahweh in the flesh, the one and only.

Can you see it? The Lord (Yahweh), the Lord (Yahweh); Jesus, Jesus, "The compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining His love and forgiving wickedness, sin and rebellion." Can you see it? Or how about this? When they come to a rest, "Jesus... went out and asked them, 'Who is it that you want?' 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'I am He.' When Jesus said, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground." He declares, I Am. Like every other place we see in the Bible where I Am is fully revealed, they fall to the ground because they can't stand in His presence. Or how about when Jesus is arguing with the Pharisees about who He is. He says, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I Am." He declares that this is Yahweh in the flesh.

It doesn't mean much to us because we didn't know the name of God, most of us until today. They knew exactly what this meant. Because this is the name; the name of which they don't say, Yahweh, the name of which they pass by out of not taking it and misusing it. When Jesus says this, they knew exactly what He meant. This is why all through John, Jesus just says, "I Am." I Am, I Am, I Am, I Am, I Am, I Am. Every one of these declare His supremacy, His self-sufficiency, His self-existence, that only He has life and life in and of Himself. That everything and everyone depends on Him for everything and He doesn't depend on anyone or anything for anything. "I Am the good shepherd." The Lord (Yahweh) is my shepherd, Psalm 23. Yahweh is my shepherd. "I Am the good shepherd."

Jesus is my good shepherd. Yahweh is Jesus in the flesh. This is why at the end of His life, He says, "I have manifested Your name. I have revealed Your very self, Your real self to the people whom You have given Me out of the world." I have manifested, demonstrated, revealed, declared, shown Your name. Your name is not a vocabulary word. The name of God brings with it the reality of God; His people, His personhood, His power and His presence, to whom? The

people. Are you one of the people? Yeah. Jesus has manifested not only what God is like, but He has shown you the name of Yahweh, the great I Am, the He is in the flesh.

God has a name. He's told you His name because He wants to be in relationship with you. He is the only self-sufficient, self-existent, eternal, immortal, infinite one who has life in and of Himself. He is the Lord (Yahweh), the Lord (Yahweh). Above all elohims, above all gods, above all powers and principalities, above all rulers and authorities, He has disarmed them. He is superior to them. He created them. He has defeated them. He has come to be with you. Don't try to comprehend the greatness of the I Am in your mind.

Receive it by faith in your heart. He is. He is. He is. He is. Just close your eyes. Come on, what's the Holy Spirit saying to you today? I know that was a lot. We covered a lot of ground. I think God was shining some light on some darkness in our lives. Shining some light on some darkness in our thinking. Maybe you're starting to realize maybe it's Jesus' hand and He's inviting you to tear down that hand.

Maybe you're seeing some idols, some things that you bow down and worship in your life and you realize I don't want to worship a created thing. I worship the uncreated one. Maybe you realize you've been misusing the name of God and attributing to Him the works of darkness when He is the compassionate and gracious one, abounding in love and faithfulness. Lord, You are so much bigger and so much better than we think. We need You to give us insight and revelation and understanding. Thank You for Your Word that defines what is true and real in this world, regardless of what I've seen, been told, have experienced or believe, and that Your truth sets us free.

You are Yahweh (I am/He is). You are Yahweh, our God (Elohim). Only You are the one who sets us free. May we see You a little bit more clearly. May we know You a little bit more fully. May Your name have a little bit more gravity in our lives as we leave here today. In Your name, we pray, amen.