

"The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin." He is just. He is just because He is good, and He is good because He is just.

Will you grab your seat wherever you are. It's just taking me a second to get myself back together. Before I even say anything, here's my question for you. When was the last time your heart was moved by the goodness of God? When was the last time there was emotion or softness, kindness, brokenness, genuine joyfulness?

Because He is here all the time. You see, we've been in this series for the last couple of months. It's called Yahweh: The Lord Your God. We've just been talking about who God is, what He's like, His character, His attributes, His nature. I think it's amazing how we can come to church for years, we can be Christians for decades of our lives and have a total misunderstanding of who God actually is. Then, sometimes, we just got to stop and go back and just say, "God, just, You tell us who You say that You are."

We started by just talking about what comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you, because your thoughts direct your life. It's not just, do you think about God? It's when you think about God, do you think about Him rightly? Then, we talked about how Jesus is the image of the invisible God. That Jesus came; the primary reason Jesus came was to show us exactly who God was so we would never have to wonder or question again. Then, we talked about this concept that God actually has a name and He wants us to know His name. His name is Yahweh, which means "I Am" or "He Is," the self-sufficient, self-existent, eternal, infinite one who has life in Himself.

He has a name, which means He is not transcendent somewhere way off in the galaxy. He's here and He's close and He's relational and He wants to be in relationship with you. He is so far above all the other spiritual beings, all the other gods, all the other lords, all the other kings that He is worthy of our all. Then, we spent a couple of weeks just talking about the goodness of God, that God's glory is His goodness and His goodness is His glory. At the very core of who God is, at the deepest level, He is good. He doesn't just do good or say good or act good. He is good. Because He is good, He does good and acts good and says good. We said that God is good. God is good to you. And He's in a good mood.

My question for you is, we've gone through this, which has been weighty. It's full of gravity. It matters. How have you been responding? Like, how has your heart, your mind, your life been responding to God just telling us who He is and what He's like? Remember, we said the whole point of this series was to fix our thoughts on Jesus. If you've found yourself thinking about Him, and then is that changing anything about you? I have one more really simple verse for you in this series. I didn't know how long it was going to go.

At the end of last week, as we were finishing up the message, I just felt like the Lord say like, "Okay, this is it." Now, we're going to stop the series here for now and let this saturate and absorb and hopefully grab a hold of it in our lives. I just have this one last verse for you because we could spend the rest of our lives talking about God and not even scratch the surface. The last verse I have for you in this series is, "Be still and know that I am God." "Be still and know that I am God." There is some knowing of God that can't be pursued. It can only be experienced.

There is some knowing of God that is only found in the stillness, He tells us. Sometimes we have to still ourselves so we can actually know, experience, encounter that He is God. It's like this verse is telling us that in the rest of God, we find the rest of God. In the rest of God, when I will sit, I can find the rest of God, the parts of Him I do not yet know. "Be still and know that I am God," which means if you're never still, there's parts of Him you will never know. Maybe this is why so many of us just feel like we just don't know God, because it's so hard to be still.

It's so hard to turn off the phone, to put it down, to quiet our minds, to still our thoughts, to be by ourselves. We're so used to input and noise and communication and teaching and entertainment. Maybe all of that is why it's really hard to know God. He tells us the key to knowing Him is to be still and know. There's something about when we still ourselves, we stop being God and we start letting Him be God. We're so used to coming in and having teaching, in this, in input. But, there is some knowing of God that I can't teach you because it says it's only found in stillness.

Here's what I want to invite you to do. For the next five minutes all together, can we just be still? No teaching, no words. Can you put your phones down? Can you just make a decision right now that even if you're not into it, you're not going to dishonor the people around you by stirring? But, can you just, for five minutes, be still and know that He is God? Maybe still your mind, still your heart, and still your body. Just be aware that He's here, that He's in control.

What does He want to say? What does He want to show you? What does He want to do in you? Be still, and know that He is God.

He is God, and you are not. There's something in the stillness that allows us to experience and encounter that that's true. I would bet so many of us brought so many things into this room today – heaviness, sorrow, and anxiety, and depression, and fear, and circumstances, situations, storms.

God's invitation to us is to be still and discover who He really is and what He's really like. Was that hard for you, to sit for five minutes and still yourself and think on God? See, if you've been here, you know a question that I'm always asking is, how are you responding? What are you going to do? How are you going to activate your faith and honor what the Lord has presented to you, invited you into?

As I've been studying in this series, one of the things that's really impacted me, personally, is that as you go through the scriptures from Genesis through Revelation, when people really saw God, they fell like dead men to the ground. Like, dead men; they literally fell to the ground. They couldn't speak. They couldn't talk. They couldn't move. They lost their breath. Like, God was so much bigger and so much greater than they thought that when they saw Him, they fell like dead men, Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Paul, John. I've just been wondering in my life and in your life, have there been any things in our life that have fallen like dead men to the ground in this series? Any flesh, any worldliness, any broken thoughts, any thoughts that aren't worthy of God?

Has there been any sense of His splendor and His almighty and His majesty and His power and His greatness and His grandeur that has literally moved us in any way? You see, there's three responses all throughout Scripture that you'll see when people really see God. They fall like dead men. Then, there's these three things that happen. One is, when people see God, there is this sense of immediate repentance and personal holiness. Isaiah, he's a prophet. He's a holy guy. He spends his life walking with God and he spends most of his life telling everybody else, 'Woe to you.' "Woe to you, you sinful and wicked, broken world."

Then, it says he sees God and his immediate response was, "Woe to me. For I am a man of unclean lips and I come from a people of unclean lips and I have seen the Lord." It was like a guy who thought he had it all together, was doing the right things, trying hard for God, telling everybody else to get their act right. He saw God and he didn't care about anybody else's sin. He was like, "Woe to me." Can I ask you, has there been any repentance, any personal holiness, any sense of looking at the sin in your life, the brokenness in front of you, the worldliness, the flesh. As you're seeing God, "Woe to me. I'm going to confess and repent."

Any sense of the spirit of conviction moving in your life, brokenness before the Lord, sense of cut-to-the-heartness; that's how you know you're seeing God. The second thing that you see people do when they see God is immediate obedience. They don't negotiate with God. They don't try to find a better deal. They don't try to figure their way out. It's just like, "Here and now, I'm going to do it." When Peter really sees Jesus for the first time, Jesus gets in his boat, preaches to the crowd, talks about the kingdom. It's like Peter sees Jesus and he's starting to realize who He is. Jesus tells him to put his nets out. Peter says, "Master, we've worked hard all night and we haven't caught anything. But, because you say so, I will do it. Because you say so, Lord, I will do it." If you're familiar with that story, he throws the net over and catches a net full of fish.

We often focus on, if you're obedient, there's a net full of fish waiting for you. The net full of fish doesn't matter. The, "Because you say so, Lord, I will do it," is what matters. We're always so worried about what we're going to get out of the obedience. That means you're not seeing God. When I see God, "Because you say so, Lord." Can I ask you, what's that thing you know

God's been telling you to do? Or that thing you know He's been telling you not to do? Has the name Yahweh brought any sense of, "Because you say so, Lord, I will do it"? Then, the third thing you see is, they worship. When people see God, they can't help but worship.

Whether it's the wise men coming to see baby Jesus and they see baby Jesus. It says they hit their knees, bow down, and worshiped him and gave them all of their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. From worshiping baby Jesus in a manger all the way to the angels in the throne room of heaven day and night crying out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, God Almighty. The whole earth is full of His glory. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was, who is, and who is to come, the great I Am." Has there been any response of worship as we've just talked about God? Worship with your voice, worship with your hands, worship with your finances, worship with your time, worship with your body.

Or do we walk right back out and go back to worshiping the elohim, the other gods of our life, because somehow God's greatness hasn't captured us? The Lord is so good and He is so patient with us. It's mind blowing to me. He is so patient with me. He is so slow to anger and so forgiving. Even today, if you want nothing to do with this and you walk right out here and go right back into the world and right back into the sin and the flesh, and the worldliness and like everybody else on the wide and broad road, He still doesn't give up on you.

He still leaves the light on. He's still waiting on the front porch. Like David says, "There is nowhere you can go to flee from His presence," that's how big He is. You can go into the darkest of dark places in this world; He's right there. If you don't want Him, He'll hide Himself from you. But, make no mistake about it, wherever you go and whatever you do and whatever you say, wherever you go, there He is. But, if I don't want Him, He won't force Himself upon me. He gives me free will and He stays right here bringing goodness, bringing grace, causing His sun to rise on the evil and the good, sending His rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Trying to capture our hearts and get our attention to remind us of who He really is. What a shame it would be to spend your whole life going through the motions and never repenting, changing your mind, about who God actually is. American Christianity lives in this land of, we think we know who God is. He fits in our little box. "I'm God. He's not. He serves me. I go to church, and I pray a few prayers, and I'm a good person, and I'm conservative, and I vote," like, all the junk.

What a shame to spend your whole life thinking that's what it means to be a follower of Jesus. When Yahweh, the I Am, the only One who has life in and of Himself, the only One in whom all things depend upon for life, wants you to know His name and be His friend and walk with Him. In every way I've known how to in this series, I've tried to elevate the gravity of God before our eyes and our minds and our hearts and our lives, so we will act and live in a way that's worthy of who He is, of people that carry His name, living a life worthy, not just of who God is, but people who now He has placed His name upon.

But at some point, it comes to you and your response and your humility or lack thereof, brokenness or not, conviction or none, hunger and thirst, or already filled and satisfied with the world. But there is a gravity into who God is. I just want to say this one thing and this isn't a shot at anybody. It's just that thing in culture now where you hear people say things like, "Jesus is my homeboy." Jesus isn't your homeboy. Jesus is Yahweh in the flesh. Yes, He calls you friend. What a privilege that Yahweh calls me friend. He is not my homeboy.

He's Yahweh in the flesh. For some reason, He made me, redeemed me, is sustaining me, and He wants to know me and He wants me to know Him. "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, forgiving rebellion, wickedness, and sin." He is just because He's good. Last thing for you, this last verse; this is how God tells Moses and Aaron, the priests, to bless the people.

He says, this is how you are to bless them. Say, "The Lord (Yahweh) bless you and keep you; the Lord (Yahweh) make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord (Yahweh) turn His face towards you and give you peace. So they will put My name (Yahweh) on the Israelites and I (Yahweh) will bless them." He says, this is how you are to bless the people, declare this over their lives. In doing so, you will put My name on their life. We've said in this series, the name of God brings with it all the reality of God. When the name of God is placed on your life and you call yourself a Christian or a follower of Jesus, or you believe in God, the name of God is placed upon your life. Therefore, all the reality of who God is and what He is like comes into your life as well.

How different would our lives be if we believe that as we carry the name of God, Jesus, Yahweh, the I Am. The realities of God are always right there with us. May the Lord (Yahweh) bless you and keep you. May the Lord (Yahweh) make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord (Yahweh) turn His face towards you and give you peace.

Jesus, thank You for who You are, for what You're like, and that we can know You because You have chosen to reveal Yourself to us. Holy Spirit, I ask that you would do things inside of us that we can't do for ourselves. Help us see You, the real You. May we fall like dead men before You because of Your greatness. Stir up within our church, within this community of faith, within this family of believers that for some reason, You've put all of us together here and now. Stir up within us personal holiness, a sense of repentance and confession.

Stir up within this community of faith, this family of believers, a desire for obedience where our response is, "Because You say so Lord, we will do it." Stir up within this community of faith, this family of believers called Valley Creek 2023 in this time, in this place where You have created us and placed us, a desire to worship You, not just in song, but in all of our life, because You are worthy of it all. What a gift that we carry Your name.

"Be Still & Know" | YHWH
October 8, 2023 | Pastor John Stickl

May Your reality come forth in our lives and may we respond to You in a way that's worthy of Your goodness, goodness, goodness. May you catch the goodness of God that He is good, good to you and in a good mood. In Jesus' name, Amen.