

The Nature of the Father - Part 1

by Gayle Erwin

The sermon explores the nature of God the Father, emphasizing His unchanging character and the intimate relationship He desires with His people.

Duration: 53:42

Scripture: Numbers 6:22

Topics: "Character Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that all humans are lawbreakers and cannot keep the law. He refers to the program 'Truth or Consequences' and highlights the fact that humans are prone to breaking rules. The preacher also mentions how David understood the compassionate and gracious nature of God, as seen in Psalm 103. He contrasts this with the focus of the Israelites on the law, rather than on God's character. The sermon concludes with a mention of the nature of Jesus, highlighting qualities such as servanthood, humility, and obedience.

Transcript

I have looked forward to this particular session. In fact, this one and the next one are especially important to me, and I think you will begin to see why as we move along. First, though, I need to see if your memory is good.

You remember as we've been going through the nature of Jesus, you've been memorizing this as we go along, right? Right. And the first one was? Servant. Very good.

I knew you could remember that. And the next one was? Not lorded over others. Very good.

And the third one was? Excellent. And the fourth was? Humble. You folks are awesome.

And the fifth was? As a child. And the sixth as the? Younger. And the seventh as the? Last.

And the eighth as the? Least. And the ninth? No force. And the tenth? No blind ambition.

And number eleven? No reputation. That was a fun one. Number twelve was? Human.

Fully man, fully God. Number thirteen? Obedient even unto? Excellent. Oh, you guys are great.

I'm impressed. This is great. Now, we tend to see, or at least many do, tend to see God the Father as different from Jesus.

They see them as different personalities, in a sense. Well, they are different persons. But the thing is, God doesn't change.

What you see in the New Testament should be the same as what we see in the Old. And yet we tend to think that God the Father is this angry, white-haired old man sitting somewhere up on a cosmic rock, just waiting for a human being to come along. And when he sees one, ha-ha, zap, got him.

And then Jesus comes along and says, now look, I know Dad has moods. But you stick with me and I'll get your thing. But that cannot be.

Because Jesus says, when you've seen me, you've seen the Father. Well, surely we've missed something. Surely, if this is true, that when you've seen Jesus, you've seen the Father, we've missed something.

So, I went back into the Old Testament using this list that you have memorized. As a lens, to see if I could find places where the Father has revealed himself. Well, I found it.

I found something that meets the criteria. I was so excited, I could hardly stand it. I hope I do not insult your intelligence with what we're going to go over tonight, but, because you know it, basically.

But let's have some fun. This story begins, well, actually begins in Genesis, but we're going to take it up in Exodus. And most of what I will share with you tonight, and in our next session, when we dig into the New Testament side of this.

I will narrate to you, tell you approximately where we are, and you can then find it on your own as you look it up. But let me just basically narrate it for you. I'll read a few passages specifically.

It starts in Exodus chapter 3. My good friend Moses. I like Moses. He had a PhD in Egyptology.

But he had thoroughly messed up his life, and now the best job he can get is herding sheep way out on the back of the desert. They weren't even his own sheep. For 40 years.

Think of it. 40 years. What have you ever done for 40 years? So boring.

Same path. Same sheep. Same back.

And finally, I think God says, I think I can talk to this man now. You know, I have often prayed, God, please don't let me get so hard-headed that it takes you 40 years to get my attention. So God says, I think I can talk to this man now, and he sets a bush on fire.

You ever wondered which bush? I mean, how did God pick one? Did he, there were billions of thorn bushes like that in the desert. Did he have a Mr. Thorn Bush of Israel contest, or what? Well, I think he just looked for one that would burn, and that was available. So he sets this bush on fire.

And Moses, bored to tears in the desert, sees it. All right, something different in the desert. Let's go check it out.

He was 80, you know. And he gets over there and discovers that it was not your typical bush. It didn't burn up.

In fact, it was even more different than that. It spoke. And it knew his name.

Moses, Moses. What? Take off your shoes. You're on holy ground.

He took off his shoes and promptly entered into an argument with the bush. I love it. Folks, that takes nerve.

In fact, Jewish people have a stronger word for that. What is it? Chutzpah, chutzpah, something like that. That's sort of like murdering your parents, then throwing yourself on the mercy of the courts as an orphan.

That's nerve. Well, the bush won. And Moses says, okay, okay.

I'll go. I'll talk to Pharaoh. I'll talk to the children of Israel.

But who are you anyway? What's your name? When they ask me who sent me, what name will I tell them? Now, name is an important thing in life. They realize that when you know someone's name, you own a part of that person. I can see Bruce across a crowded area, and no matter how many people are out there, all I have to do is yell, hey, Bruce! And he stops right there.

I've got him. Just by knowing someone's name, you own something about them. So God responded and he said, you tell them, I am, that I am, or who I am has sent you.

Oh, I get goosebumps when I say that. I am has sent you. If I were to send you, I would have to say, tell them I ain't has sent you.

Or the great maybe. But God is an I am. Now, you know that this is written, these letters Y-H-W-H are the letters that spell out this name.

If you ever see the word tetragrammaton in any technical religious writing, you know it's speaking of these four letters. The problem is, it's just a little hard to pronounce. Now, I have a dear rabbi friend, outstanding rabbi, with whom I've been in conversation over this passage.

And he says to me that we lost the pronunciation of this name many centuries ago. And rather than insult God and embarrass ourselves, we never, ever attempt in any way to pronounce it. And in its place, we will write the word LORD in capital letters, usually.

And a little lesson, you probably already know this too. But as you're reading the Old Testament, when you come to the word LORD, notice and see if it's capitalized all the way through. If it is, and most versions will do this, then this is the word that they have used to replace the letters.

It's not an actual translation. That's a little bit of a problem we have here. But it's a word that we've used to replace these four letters, Y-H-W-H.

So when you see that word LORD in your mind, you can just peel that up and know that underneath it are the letters Y-H-W-H. And it's not actually a translation. It's just a replacement word there.

Or he will say, sometimes we'll say HaShem or The Name. Now, to a Jewish person, if you say The Wall, there's only one wall. And that's the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.

Or if you say The Name, there's only one name. And it's this one. But he said, we've lost the pronunciation.

Now, that's a sad thing. Because that sort of puts at a distance. It's like if I were to see Bruce and I said, hey, Baruch Teh.

He'd say, wait a minute, Erwin, you know who I am. Well, that's it. If I know who you are, why am I mispronouncing your name? And so that's the way they felt about it.

But it puts God at a distance. What if I'm coming home, luggage in hand, and I'm headed toward the steps, and the children see me, and they go rushing into Mama and say, Mama, the great unpronounceable being is here. All right, they don't do that.

They go, Daddy! And when Jesus said he broke every rule in the book, what did he say to The Name? Well, we have a problem with this. Because, you see, we can't pronounce that. We don't fully know the pronunciation of it.

He goes on, and he says, this is the name I've chosen to be known by from generation to generation from now on. Got a problem, don't we? Can't pronounce it. And then in Ephesians chapter 3, Paul lets us know that he's the father after whom his whole family on earth is named.

So that's our last name, and we can't even pronounce it. I'm Gale Irwin. Well, what we've done, uncomfortable with that, is we've added an A and an E, and we call him Yahweh.

Now, that may be accurate. I'm pretty certain about the very first syllable of this. Do you ever say the word? Of course you do.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallels to Yah, or praises to Yah.

And this is a contraction of the name that they used, or if you'll just take note of Psalm 68, 4, I'll read it to you. It says, sing unto God, sing praises to his name, extol him that writeth upon the heavens by his name, Yah, and rejoice before him. So we have plenty of evidence of that one.

The problem is this other syllable. Now, I personally am comfortable with it, to be honest with you, and I find no qualms in my own heart about using this as a rather accurate word, and it's been pretty well accepted as such for quite a long time. Well, there's another word we use that's actually probably even more common than that, but much less accurate.

I understand that there were some old students many centuries ago, not too many, this is a fairly modern name, who were uncomfortable with these letters they couldn't pronounce, so they took the vowels from the word Adonai, which is another word for Lord, which means Master, and mixed them in with this and came up with the least accurate of all the words we use for him, Jehovah. I feel so sorry for the Jehovah's Witnesses when I realize this. Of all the names they could have picked, they picked the least accurate one.

Now, you may be thinking, no wonder my prayers don't get answered. I've been using the wrong name. Well, you can relax.

God's pretty sharp, actually. He knows who you're talking to when you address Him. In fact, when I go to Zimbabwe, if you're a Shona tribesman, you will say Mwadi.

If you're a Mdebele tribesman, you'll say Musiki. And God knows who you're speaking to when you use His name. But I want you to see that we do have a little bit of a problem here.

Well, let's leave it alone for a moment and continue our march through this revelation that God is giving Moses. In chapter 6, He says, You're the first one I've revealed my name to. Your forefathers knew me as El Shaddai, or the Almighty, but you're the one that I've explained this name to.

Then the next real revelation moment we have, Moses is up on a mountain getting something written down from God. Oh, by the way, Moses was pastor of a fairly good-sized church. You know that, don't you? It was definitely the biggest church in the desert.

We know that. About two and a half million people. Not bad for a congregation.

And when he went up on that mountain in Exodus 32, he left his church with his brother Aaron. And Aaron had walked with him. Aaron should understand.

But God said to Moses, Moses, you'd better get back down the mountain. Things are not well. So Moses scurries back down the mountain with those tablets in hand, and he turns the corner, and sure enough, there they are in various stages of debauchery, dancing around a golden calf.

We still do that today. If gold's involved, hey, here we come. And it was all Moses could handle.

And in anger, he threw those tablets down and broke them. And went up to Aaron and says, Aaron, what's going on? Aaron says, I don't know. I just threw in the gold, and out came this calf.

What can I say? And then he says to Moses the saddest words a pastor can hear. You've got to understand, Moses, these people are prone to sin. Now, how would you like to pastor two and a half million people prone to sin, who are accidentally righteous? You'd rather pastor two and a half million people prone to righteousness, who accidentally sin.

Well, then God said to Moses, Tell you what, Moses, let me kill them. I'll start all over with you. Now, if I'd have been Moses, I would have seriously considered that.

Oh, yeah, I tell you, boy, they wear me out, God. I mean, they're prone to sin, you know? But I think Moses rose to maybe his highest moment when he said, No, if you wipe them out, wipe me out, too. I think God must have thought, way to go, Moses.

Now you're thinking right. Well, this brings us to Exodus 33. Exodus 33 begins.

God's letting Moses know that he's going to send his angel on ahead of them. He'll drive your enemies out. He'll provide for you.

It'll be a land of milk and honey. But Moses, I'm not going. Because if I go, I know what you'll do.

You'll do something dastardly and I'll get angry and have to destroy you. Now, if I were Moses, well, I would have considered this offer, too. Oh, you'll take care of us.

You'll send your angel ahead, drive our enemies out. Sounds good to me. And many people I know are satisfied with that from God.

Just take care of me. Make me wealthy. Provide for me.

Drive my enemies out. But we'll discover later on in this chapter that Moses was not satisfied with that. In essence, he said, no, your provision is great, but we want your presence.

You don't go. We don't go. We want you.

I like that. That let me know that Moses really loved God. You see, we want your presence.

For instance, what if I were to call my wife and say, honey, I'll be home tomorrow. And she says, that won't be necessary. Just send money.

Well, fortunately, she doesn't do that. And Moses didn't treat God that way. We want your presence.

Well, then we find Moses building a tent of meeting outside the camp, beyond the gates of the camp, where anyone who wished could go and inquire of the Lord. I like that. I think I understand why he built it outside the gates, outside the camp.

Have any of you ever gone tent camping and camped in a really crowded, noisy campground? Can you imagine this campground? Two and a half million people. You probably don't go to downtown Los Angeles for your quiet time, do you? So he built it outside the camp where anyone could go and inquire of the Lord. Something would happen.

This fascinates me. When Moses would leave headquarters and turn his face toward that tent of meeting and begin to walk toward it, the word would get out. Everyone would rush to the front of their tent and stand at attention and watch while Moses walked to that tent.

Boy, that's our leader. And he's going to talk with God. Wow.

And Moses would enter the tent and the cloud would come down and Moses and God would speak to one another, literally mouth to mouth. Our version says face to face, but it's literally mouth to mouth as a friend speaks to a friend. And now for the entire time that Moses and God were speaking to one another, the people who had stood at attention now worshipped God for the entire time Moses was in that tent.

That's another goose bumper, folks. Meanwhile, back in the tent, Moses and God are, well, kind of arguing, actually. I'm not going.

You don't go. We don't go. I'm not going.

You don't go. We don't go. And then God says to Moses, and I'll paraphrase this.

Moses, I like you. You found favor and grace in my eyes. How would you like to hear God say that to you? I like you.

He has. And if you haven't heard it, please hear it tonight. I like you.

I know your name. Oh, that's encouraging, too. I am not to God number 950364827.

I know your name, Gail. Strange name for a guy, but I know it. And then he says, I'll do what you ask.

How would you like to hear God say that? What do you want? I'll do it. Oh, now, if I'd have been Moses, I know what I would have said. How about a house in Hawaii? God, I need some rest, man.

These people are prone to sin. That's not what he said. In essence, he says, I want to see you.

Show me your glory. Show me your glory. Awesome.

I want to write this word up here because we're going to make an amazing discovery about it in just a moment. Show me your glory. Now, when you love someone, letters are nice.

Phone calls are great. But when you love someone, you want to see them. And Moses is saying that, God, I want to see you.

Show me your glory. If you'll do what I ask, if I found favor in your eyes, if you know my name, show me your glory. I've often wondered just what is the glory of God.

Have you ever wondered that? When it came down, when they dedicated the tabernacle and the temple, the glory of God was so strong that the priest couldn't even minister. And it caused him to come up with a word to describe this dwelling presence. It's not really a biblical word, but it's a good word.

Shekinah. In an attempt to explain this glory, what is it anyway? Is it a cloud that comes up out of the ground and wraps around you and you don't dare look or your face will melt like in Raiders of the Lost Ark or something? What is it? God says, well, tell you, Moses, I'm paraphrasing here, folks. You can you can look at all.

You've asked a tough one. But I tell you what, I'll have all my goodness pass in front of you. I will mercy whom I will mercy.

Oh, where have we heard those words before? Psalm 23, David says, Surely goodness and mercy will chase me. I mean, follow me. All the days of my life.

You ever wondered what's chasing you? Now, you know, slow down, let it catch you. And he says, I will proclaim my name or preach my name or define my name or explain my name. Now, what we have happening here is God is attaching his name and his glory together.

He says, you want to see my glory, then I will define my name. Now, if you look up glory in your Bible dictionary, you'll discover it's the essence of his being. It has to do with weight.

It's just what he is. And back in that day, when you named someone, you would name them in keeping with who they are so that if you knew the definition of the person's name, you knew the person. See, we don't do that today.

We just sort of flip through baby books until we find names that sound good. And that's what we name them like. My parents named me Gail, which means a big win.

So obviously, parents. So at any rate, God is here saying, I will define my name for you so you will know the very essence of my being. You will know what I am.

And that's the same thing as my glory. So here he attaches name and glory together. Then he says, you know, there's a there's a place near me and a rock or you could say a rock near me.

Those are good words. You could spend some time on that, couldn't you? And there's a cleft in that rock or a split place in that rock. And what I'll do, Moses, is I will hide you in that split place and I'll cover you

there with my hand.

And as I pass by and define or explain or reveal my name or preach my name as I pass by, when I get by, I'll move my hand. I'll let you get just a glimpse of my back. But you can't see my face, because if you see my face, you'll die and I don't want you to die.

So, Moses, tomorrow, I want you to I want you to take two tablets and see me in the morning. Medical profession's been around a long time, hasn't it? And I don't want anyone else on the mountain but me and you. I don't even want any cattle on the mountain.

Now we come to Exodus 34. I think if I were Moses, I would not have slept that night knowing that tomorrow I'm going to see God. I think he probably got up early.

I think this pathway was a familiar one to him. I think he had been at that rock before. Somehow I feel he had been in that split place before.

And as he finds his way up there and I can see him putting those tablets against the stone out there and making his way back into that split place and just waiting, I'm going to see God. And sure enough, here he comes. That hand is across the opening and he's looking at the very fingerprints of God and God passes by and in this moment reveals himself.

He preaches his name, the Lord, the Lord, or YHWH, YHWH, or I am who I am or Yahweh, Yahweh or Jehovah, Jehovah. And he defines his name here and he says the merciful and gracious God. Now, I need to tell you that this word mercy, we're going to see it several times in here and this one I want to redefine because it's specific definition is compassionate.

So let's write this up here. The compassionate and gracious God. Compassion.

Oh, this is a very tender word. It is pity move to do something about it. It's the same kind of tenderness of a parent who is teaching its child how to walk and protecting as it goes along.

And if it stumbles and falls, it picks it up, dusts it off, hugs it and places it back down and protects it as it walks along. That kind of tenderness, compassion. Jesus was moved with compassion and gracious or this incredible favor toward us.

Oh, grace. You know, I once preached, God help me, that you have to balance grace and the law. But you can't do it, you know.

I need to tell you, God's warped. He's warped. The law is fulfilled.

But what has happened to grace and mercy? It gets renewed, doesn't it? How often? Every morning. Incredible. When you woke up this morning, God looked at you and said, oh.

Spent it all in one place, didn't you? Well, I tell you what I'll do. He says, here is a fresh batch just for today. His mercies never come to an end.

Folks, how long is never? Never. Gracious God, I'm so glad you're warped. Long suffering or let me write it down as slow to anger.

You ever get the feeling that God's up in heaven looking at you and saying, all right, you do that just one more time, boy. Bam. But no.

He is slow to anger. He has a long fuse. God is not touchy.

If we say our father who art in heaven, he doesn't go. What? No, he is so slow to anger. Abounding in goodness and truth.

Now, I want to redefine goodness here, because in just a verse or so here, we're going to discover that it's also translated as mercy. So I want to take goodness here and translate it as mercy, abounding in mercy. This is that has said mercy, abounding in truth.

Now, this is the truth that asks to say when you say of someone that's a true person, not propositional truth as a true statement, but a person who is true. So let's say abounding in trustworthiness would be appropriate or abounding in faithfulness, abounding in mercy and faithfulness. Man, we wish people would just be merciful or loving enough or faithful enough.

But God abounds in it. He's got more of it than he knows what to do with. He's stacking it in the streets, looking for a way to get it distributed.

Paul even uses that word in Ephesians, abounding as he speaks of the mercy of God. You know what another word for it is? Lavish. He lavishes.

I'm a grandfather. I have a new understanding of the word lavish. You know, us grandfathers can't trust ourselves when Christmas rolls around.

We go into grocery stores and come out with toys. And you think, great, I've got a room full of them at the house waiting on the kids. But oh, I saw these and I thought about them.

They'll like it sometime or other. Lavish. You know, I once thought that God had big armfuls of blessings, but he wasn't sure he wanted me to have them.

So he says, well, okay, Gail, beg. No, you're not using the right words. You've got to use the right word.

But no, his arms are open to us. He abounds in mercy and faithfulness. He lavishes on us.

Maintaining or extending mercy to thousands. My rabbi friend says that's literally mercy to the thousands generation. And one or two translations translate it that way.

Now, if a generation is 40 years and that's really just an educated guess, we don't know for sure. Then a thousand generations would have to be 40,000 years. Thousands generation would have to be at least 80,000 years.

Do you realize that your relationship with God has begun at least 80,000 years of blessing? So if you ever feel worthless, look at what you started. How's God going to do that? I don't know, but I like it. I like it.

Then he says, forgiving, iniquity. Let's translate it to wickedness. Now, you may say, well, I don't think I would put myself in the wicked category, Erwin.

That's okay. He's got you covered. Forgiving, transgression or rebellion.

Well, you may say, I don't think I would put myself in the rebellious category, Erwin. That's okay. He's got you covered.

Forgiving, sin. Well, yeah, you got me there. Pretty good, huh? You like this list? It's too good, isn't it? It's just too good.

Compassionate, gracious, slow to anger. Abounding in mercy. Abounding in faithfulness.

Mercy to thousands. Forgiving, wickedness, rebellion and sin. Oh, God can't be that good, can he? But he is.

He is. And folks, this is just the back. I understand why Moses could not have seen the phase.

It would have blown every fuse in his body. If God is this good and this is just the back. Now you may be saying, there's more, Erwin.

There's more. Yes, you're right. Yet not letting the guilty go free.

Visiting the sins of the father on the children to the third and the fourth generations. Oh, punishment. Oh, my poor children.

I don't have a chance. But I have good news for you. Deuteronomy chapters 5 and 7. Fine tune this for us and let us know that punishment is only for those who hate him.

Oh, so if I were to go down these roads and say, do you hate him? Oh, no. Do you hate him? Oh, no. Do you hate him? Oh, no.

Do you hate him? Oh, no. Then this doesn't even apply to you. Only this top part applies to you.

The bottom part punishment is only for those who hate him. This is too good. Now we have the definition of both his name and his glory.

Now he has defined his name and revealed his glory to Moses in this definition of himself. This is too much almost. Too much.

Now, you know, children of Israel knew this was what God was like. But you know what they did? They focused on the law. The law.

The law. Well, the thing about the law is that that's what I keep. That's what I do.

And when you see someone who is very legalistic minded, they're also very centered. But folks, the law was given to us to prove to us that we couldn't keep it. It was given to us to show us what we were really made out of.

It was given to us to show us that we needed to be driven to his name, you see. But there's something about us, all of us that says, I'll do it. I'll turn over a new leaf.

I will change. But folks, I took one look at you tonight when I got up here and I knew you were a bunch of lawbreakers. I could just tell.

You don't think so? I'll just say two words. Fifty-five. Oh, yeah.

We're still waiting on the speed limit to catch up with us here, aren't we? We're lawbreakers. In fact, a number of years ago, back when television was truly black and white, now it's gotten kind of fuzzy. There was a program called Truth or Consequences.

Any of you remember that one? It was a pretty good program, actually. And I remember they offered one hundred thousand dollars. That was a lot of money back then.

Today, you carry it in your pocket, don't you? A hundred thousand dollars to someone from the audience who would simply not break the law for 30 minutes. Oh, everyone, yeah, yeah, me, me. They finally picked a guy out and he came up and they said, now, now we won't ask you to break the law.

We'll ask you to help us in a couple of skits, but we won't ask you to break the law. And it won't be breaking the law just being up here on the stage. Oh, you could see that man.

He was spending it already. Oh, he was beside himself. A hundred thousand dollars.

And at one point they said, help us with this next skit. And he said, OK. So they threw him a pack of cigarettes.

They said, would you open this for us? He said, OK. So he opened one corner, like smokers often do, so they could tap out one at a time. Tossed it back to him.

He said, sir, you just lost a hundred thousand dollars. What? They threw the pack back to him. They said, read the seal across the top.

Now, I think they've changed this now. But back then, that seal said, this seal must be broken when this package is open under penalty of law. And he went, oh, no, a hundred thousand dollar pack.

That's about what they cost, by the way. We can't keep the law, can we? It's just tough, isn't it? I was taking a traffic school once. I won't tell you why.

And I was sort of. Yeah, two words. I was almost sorry I took it because the teacher marched through all the traffic laws.

And I discovered I was breaking about half a dozen of them a day routinely. Didn't even know it. But the law was given to drive us to his name.

That's why we can say. And now it'll begin to make some sense to you. The name of the Lord is a strong tower.

Remember that? The righteous run to it and are safe. Now, see, logic, the way the world would think, and my old carnal nature would think, wouldn't say that. It would say something like this.

The name of the Lord is a strong terror. Sinners run from it and are safe. But that's not what it says.

Righteousness means we know where to run. And so we run to his name and we discover all compassion, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in goodness or mercy and in truth, maintaining or extending love or mercy to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. By the way, I've kind of messed up your minds right now.

I need to tell you this. From now on, when you see the word name and it's talking about God or the word glory and it's talking about him or the word Lord, you know what you're going to think? You're going to think, oh, yes, compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in mercy and faithfulness, mercy to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. You won't be able to help it.

See, I have this agreement with God that he'll haunt you with some holy ghost, you know. It'll be like my saying to you for the next 10 seconds, I don't want anyone to think of monkeys. When you see the word name or the word glory and it has to do with God or you see that word Lord, you're going to think, oh, yes, compassionate, gracious, slow to anger.

Yes, abounding in mercy and faithfulness. Yes, mercy to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. You won't be able to help it.

But it will come alive to you. Now I can understand why God said thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. What does that mean? I used to think it meant don't cuss.

And it does mean that. But it means if you're going to take his name and put it on yourself or put it over your door on your organization, then it better be compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in mercy and faithfulness, mercy to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Or else you have used his name in vain.

You've misused his name. If I start an organization and I want to put God's name on it, boy, my organization better be compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in mercy and faithfulness, mercy to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Or I have misused or used in vain his name.

You will have fun going through the Bible now and looking for these words because it will explode in your mind. David knew that this was what God was like. Reread Psalm 103 before you go to bed.

It's a short psalm in it. You will discover David knew his God. You are a compassionate and gracious God, not counting men's sins against them.

Nehemiah knew when they had finished the walls of Jerusalem and were dedicating them and they prayed this prayer. It was a prayer of confession. How would you like to have Pastor Chuck get up every Sunday and confess your sins for you? Would take a while, wouldn't it? So they get up and they confess the sins of Israel.

And throughout that prayer, they stop it with this punctuation. But you are a gracious and compassionate God, not counting men's sins against them. Awesome.

Jonah knew. I like Jonah. Jonah is my favorite racist in the Bible.

Jonah hated Nineveh. Hate him, hate him, hate him, hate him. And God says, you're my man.

I've got a message just for you. I want you to go and tell Nineveh I hate him too. In fact, 40 days, I'm going to kill him.

Wipe him out. You would think Jonah would jump up and rush off to Nineveh, but no, he ran away. Now, folks, if you're going to run away from God, don't hide in his living room.

You know the rest of the story. God found him. He ends up as whale puke.

And he says, I think I'll go to Nineveh now. And he gets to Nineveh. A little gross, I know.

I'm not very politically correct. You'll just have to forgive me. He gets to Nineveh and preaches his favorite sermon.

Nineveh, you're through. God hates you. I do too, but that's beside the point.

God really hates you, Nineveh. 40 days and you're through. Boy, that's called the good news, isn't it? One small catch.

Nineveh got saved. The whole town repented. They even made the cows fast.

But that didn't slow Jonah down. Oh, no. Day 40 rolls around.

He finds a safe place where he can see the fireworks. This will be good. But nothing happened.

You know what he did? He went over and he sat down and he pouted. You ever pout? Well, folks, this wasn't just an ordinary pout. This was a prophetic pout.

I have an idea that his lips hung down around his knees. You know, he sat there so pouty, man. This gourd grows over his head and gives him.

I mean, he's pouting in the sun. He's thankful for that. And then God sends a worm, kills the gourd, gets mad.

You know, later on, you know, Nineveh backslid and was destroyed. And sometimes I think Jonah, who brought the revival, was the man who killed it also. I can see him sitting over there, pouting.

Moms and dads and their children walk by and a little boy says, Daddy, who's that man over there? Well, that's the pastor, son. Really? What's the matter with him? Oh, he's angry. Really? Why? Because we're still alive.

Oh, now I can understand why Jonah in the very fourth chapter of Jonah says this. Verse one. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly.

And he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord. What a prayer.

And said, Lord, wasn't this my saying when I was yet in my country? I knew. That you were a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness and repentantly of sin. You forgive people of evil.

I knew you would do this. You see, Jonah came in God's name. But not in his nature.

And my heart cries out, Oh, God, wherever you send me, somehow enable me not just to go in your name. But to go in your nature, wherever I go, whatever I do, however you choose for me to serve you. Somehow, Lord, help me be compassionate and gracious.

Let me be slow to anger. Let me abound in mercy and faithfulness. Let me extend mercy to thousands.

Enable me also to forgive wickedness, rebellion and sin as I clothe myself with you. His name. Now you know what it means.

You know what he's like. And if tonight you have viewed God the Father in some other way. If you have felt distant from him, uneasy, edgy around him.

If you have found it difficult to love him because you didn't know he was this way. Tonight, adjust your thinking and understand that this God of mercy has come near you. You don't have to be afraid.

He's slow to anger. He is filled with compassion and grace. He abounds in mercy and faithfulness.

He extends mercy to the thousands generation. He forgives wickedness. He forgives rebellion, forgives sin.

And if you've held him away tonight, move near him and say, Father, I know what you're like now. Forgive me for being distant from you. I know you have walked near to me and come close, and yet I have been uncomfortable.

But tonight, I let you wrap your arms around me because I know now I'm your child and you are my father. And I gladly have you for a father. I gladly be your child.

Tell him that. Tell him that. Now, in our next session, we're going to move into the New Testament and see where Jesus and this mesh together.

When I saw this, I was overcome with joy. I cannot wait to share this with you. Thank you.

I can't tonight. It's another hour. However, there's one more thing we can do.

Because now that you see this, something comes alive in ways that it might not have before. You know this by heart. You even sing it.

Numbers chapter 6, beginning with verse 22. And this is a good thing for us to go home on. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, speak to Aaron and his son, saying, this is the way you shall bless the children of Israel.

Say to them, the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

You know it, don't you? But look at the next verse. So they shall put my name on the children of Israel and I will bless them. Oh, this is a powerful blessing, folks.

It enables us literally to put God's name on people. He has issued us a stamp pad with his name. And all we have to do is go to people and say, the Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. The Lord bless you and keep you.

Make his face shine upon you. Lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. Lord bless you and keep you.

And if you forget everything except the Lord bless you, he understands shorthand. Don't worry. What a ministry you have tonight to the people who you are with, who are around you, who you are yet going to meet tonight or tomorrow.

Get your stamp pad out. It's your ticket to leave here tonight. We won't let you out until you stamp someone.

Husbands and wives, maybe you've never done this for each other before. Maybe you've never said this to each other. Maybe all you've ever said was, where's my socks? Children and parents, maybe you've never said this to each other before tonight.

I want you to say it because God empowers us to stamp his name, compassion, grace, slow to anger, abounding in mercy and faithfulness, mercy to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin on each other. You ready? All right, let's stand. Folks, this is dismissal.

I'm not going to do anything after this. It's your job now. Get your stamp pads.

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