

Experiencing God

#4 Love and God's Invitation

April 26, 2020

All right. Good morning, Southeast family and friends, wherever you are. So glad that you chose to join us and we're going to jump into our sermon here. Right before we do, I want to throw out one thing that I want you to be aware of and that is we have a group that's part of our church that is a nonprofit that works in downtown Denver called the treasure house of hope and I love them. They are so wonderful and their ministry is so in line with our vision because it's all about making disciples. They have two houses, a men's house and a women's house and they come in and have people move in for a year with them and they literally walk alongside them and disciple them for a year. And it's basically a self-funded ministry. And the way that they fund that ministry is that they will bake loaves of bread, little loaves or different kinds of bread like banana bread, zucchini bread, different kinds of bread. And they go to different businesses around where they are and they sell those and that money goes then to fund the ministry, which is great. Now, here's the trick. Since everything is kind of shut down, a lot of the businesses that they sell to are just not open and even those that are open don't have the business that they had prior to the pandemic. And so, here's what I want us to do on the 2nd of May --and there'll be information coming on our website and social media-- on the 2nd of May. They're going to set up in our parking lot a place where you can just do a drive

through. You don't have to get out of your car and you don't have to touch anybody. For a lot of people, this has been like the best 54 days of their life. You don't have to touch anybody, but you don't have to touch anybody. They'll be masked and gloved, but they're planning to bring about 1200 loaves of bread to sell to people who would be willing to drive by to help fund their ministry. This is an opportunity for us to make a legitimate difference in a kingdom minded ministry going forward. And I want to offer that to us on the 2nd of May. Write it down. Information will be coming, but you can drive through buy a loaf of bread --if you don't want bread, if you're like, I'm low carb, never fear, you can give that to SECOR, they can help distribute it or you can give it to a family that maybe needs it and help out with people getting that and funding the ministry. It's a simple way for us to do that and it's an excuse for you to get out and go for a drive.

So that, that's one thing. Here's the other thing, if you're a volunteer in our church --this week is volunteer appreciation week. So, number one, you rock. Number two, we got a little something, something for you too, from 12 to 2 today. What I want you to do is, if you're a volunteer, don't be all, "well, I want something". Volunteerism has its privileges. If you're a volunteer, what I want you to do is jump in your car, drive down past the front entrance of the church, and we're going to have a gift for you. You don't have to get out of your car, you don't have to do anything, people are going to be masked and gloved. It'll be totally sanitary. And so we want for you, if you're a volunteer to jump in your car from 12 to 2 today, drive by the

front of the church and we want to give you a gift just to say thank you in this crazy time where we're at. It's been even more evident how amazing and how important our volunteers are. So it's really cool, to say thank you to you and that we are able to do that is pretty great. So that's all that.

We're going to jump into our sermon and we are in week four of experiencing God experiencing God is this workbook that was written by Henry Blackaby that's wrestling with the question, when God is working around me, how do I know? How do I know when God's speaking to me? How do I know when God's invited me to be a part of something? How do I know when God wants to use me for something? And so, we've been kind of wrestling with that and over the last three weeks of this series, we've been wrestling with some of these kinds of preliminary questions of, is Jesus actually the boss of our life? Because if he isn't, then the assumption that God would ever allow us to do anything for him kind of feels a bit presumptuous. I just used a lot of really big words. Let me say that another way. If we're not willing to make Jesus the boss of our life, we can't assume that God would ever want to use us for anything. Now he may, because he loves us and because he's a God of grace, but if we're not willing to make him the boss, we're getting in the way of our own usability from the kingdom's perspective. So we've been talking about what does that look like and how God loves us. God's not mad at us. Like when God wants to use us, he's not trying to control or dictate or demean us. God wants to set us free to maximize the

potential that he put in us at creation. God really, really cares about us being everything that he intended us to be. So, we talked a little bit about what that relationship looks like. We're going to continue with that today. So, let's begin in John chapter 14 here's what it says. It says, let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. In my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so I would've told you that I, and I've told you that I go to prepare a place for you. Now let me talk to you about what's going on here. Cause it's beautiful. In the Jewish world, marriages are arranged and you don't fall in love and date for a while and then have a big proposal. What the mom and the dad of each family, they kind of come together, make an agreement. When there's a deal to be struck, the young groom and the young bride will have a meeting with their fathers. The groom and his father will come to the house of the bride and her father, the potential bride. And what will happen is the groom will lay out what is called the katuba, which means a marriage contract and it's basically a few major points of this is what I believe that a marriage should look like. He has with him a glass of wine with him. Now, if she hears his contract and agrees with it, then she takes the wine and drinks it. If she doesn't agree with what he says, then she takes the wine glass and pushes it back to him. Now, we don't ever have an example of that happening because that would be huge shame on their family, but this is how the process worked. Then what would happen is he would go back to his family's insula, his family's communal dwelling, and he would begin to construct a room for he and his new bride to live in. They would live in that room for two years by themselves and then after

that they would move into the communal sleeping area and that room would be repurposed. Now here's the funny thing, if he is any kind of red-blooded young man, he's going to put that room up in about 20 minutes. His dad being the old wise kind of jerk, for lack of a better term, the guy who's going to like, no, no, we can't do this. He's going to come and go, Oh like this for your bride? Come on. He'll tear it down, make him start over, and he'll have to rebuild. Now this will go on for a certain amount of time. We don't know exactly how long. The only person who gets to decide that is the father of the groom. And when he says that it's enough, then what happens is that he grabs his son and the whole village comes together and they have the wedding feast. So when the groom and his father leave, what he will say is, to the bride, if she drinks the wine, what he'll say is in my father's house are many rooms, but I'm going to prepare a place for you. And if I do, I'll come back for you and no one knows the hour. Only my father knows, but I'll come again.

So what Jesus is doing in this passage during the last supper, and this is right before he gets arrested and then crucified. What he's doing here is renewing the marriage covenant between God and his people. And it's beautiful language. By the way, he does it with a cup just like it would have been done. And so this is the language that's going on. Cause this is always, it's always struck me as weird. Um, and the King James, it says there's a lot of mansions. Well that's saying a whole lot for the word that's there, that it's mansions isn't a great translation. And furthermore, that's been translated into kind

of our heavenly dwelling, right? Like there's going to be mansions. The room that he's talking about building probably wouldn't have been much more than like four feet by six feet. This is, they basically went in there and got in bed. They slept there. That's the only thing that they did there. It's not like they had a walk in closet and their own bathroom and all that kind of stuff. So, not a very fancy room. Mansion is a very glorious description of what Jesus is talking about here, but it's this invitation back into this wedding covenant between God and his people. Why? Because there's no more intimate connection and relationship that you will have than between a husband and a wife. And this is the kind of relationship that God wants with you and me. The intimate connectedness that comes when you know somebody so well that when you're not together, you're somehow less because the two of you have become one. When you see people who've been married 50, 60 years, they don't even hardly have to talk anymore because they know each other so well. Like my mom and dad, they've been married like a thousand years. It's funny to watch them communicate, especially when my mom's frustrated at my dad and he's trying to talk to her, but trying to talk her out of being frustrated and he'll start talking and he'll get halfway through a sentence. And she'll be like, don't even say it. I know what you're gonna say and it does not even make sense. Right? You should've done this. You should've done this. And he's like, well, but you don't, I don't even say it. Like they, they finish one another's sentences. They know what they're thinking. The two have become one because they've been together and connected for so long. This is the kind of relationship God is

longing to have with his people. That we would know God so well, that we would know his mind and his heart before he speaks. And that's what Jesus is inviting his people into. And he says, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I'll come again and I'll take you to myself that where I am, you may be also. And you know the way to where I'm going. And so, Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me. Now we're going to actually pull that statement apart in the next coming up series, we're going to go through the seven I Am's of the book of John and what John is doing there, but Jesus makes this profound statement. I am the way, the truth, and the life. If you had known me, you would have known my father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. And Phillip said to him, Lord, show us the father and it is enough for us. And Jesus said to him, have I been with you so long and you still don't know me? Whoever's seen me has seen the father. How can you say, show us the father? Do you not believe that I am the father and the father's in me and the these words that I speak, I do not speak on my own authority, but the father who dwells in me does his work. Believe me, that I am in the father and the father is in me or else believe on the account of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do because I'm going to the father.

Now, let me stop there for just a second and say this. Part of our relationship with God is that in knowing God and in walking

with him, he does things through us in the world and he does things for us in the world that are profoundly impactful. It's God's intervention in our life. He does these things for us. Now, the disciples had seen Jesus do all kinds of miracles, but what he says is, listen, if you stay with me, you're going to do greater things than this. Greater things than you've seen me do. You're going to do. God is going to work through you to do even more impressive things -- which is kind of a deal, because they've seen Jesus raise people from the dead. They've seen Jesus heal lepers and Jesus says, look, if you really believe in me, you're going to do more. Which is kind of cool. Then he says, whatever you ask in my name this I will do that. The father may be glorified in the son. If you asked me anything in my name, I'll do it. If you love me, you'll keep my commandments. Remember this marriage idea, if you want to be married to me, if you love me, here's how you do it. Keep my commandments. It's like a, you've heard of the five love languages, right? Everybody has five love languages. I only know one cause that's all that matters. My wife's is quality time. Then there's acts of service, gifts, physical touch and words of affirmation. These are the five love languages. If you were to ask, what is God's love language? Here's what I would say based on this verse, obedience – that's God's love language. If you want to tell God that you love him, obey him. People get weirded out about pushing obedience like, well, that's works righteousness or you're trying to impose religiosity on me. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. From a Jewish perspective, you would never say that this is legalistic or that it's hard or religious or anything like that. When God gives us a way to follow him, following him shows

him that I love him, so his commandments aren't legalism. His commandments are ways that I can show him that I love him. That's what he's talking about. If you love me, you'll keep my commandments and I'll ask the father and he'll give you another helper. He's talking about the Holy spirit there to be with you forever. Even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him for he dwells with you and will be with you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me because I live. You also will live in that day. You will know that I am my father and you in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them. He says it again. He it is who loves me and he who loves me will be loved by my father and I will love him and manifest myself to him. And then Judas, not Iscariot. I think it's funny that they have to make that distinction, Judas, but not the bad one. Said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world? And Jesus answered him. If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my father will love him and he will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words and the word that you hear is not mine, but the father's who sent me.

Okay. So what Jesus is saying here is, look, if you love me, you'll keep my commandments. You'll do what I say. If you don't love me, you won't. If you don't have the word, you won't do it. And the words that I'm speaking to you, they aren't my words. I didn't make this stuff up. This stuff came from God himself.

So ,this is Jesus' set up into this intimate relationship that God longs to have with us, this desire that we act in the intimate senses of a married couple. Like, like the intimacy is so much bigger than physicality. And, unfortunately, we live in a culture that's reduced it to that, but like intimacy and all of its facets, all of its connectedness. This is the relationship that God for us and what Jesus says is when we have that kind of a relationship with God, all of a sudden we start to see God do all these crazy things and we get to be a part of it. Even greater things maybe than what Jesus did. And so, I want to talk with us this morning about the five kind of points out of this chapter in this workbook and we're going to move through them fairly quickly.

Here's what it says. Number one, knowing God comes through experience. The way that we start to kind of know who God is, is through experience. The Hebrew word for know, for knowledge, is the word, yada, yada. And it's the same word that's used to describe the relationship between a husband and a wife when they conceive a child. They know each other, they yada one another, and the word literally means to experience someone. This is the idea of knowledge from the biblical perspective. Knowledge isn't just mental assent. Knowledge is about the ability to experience someone. When I experience you, then I know you. In a Jewish world, you would never tell people what you believe. They would observe you and know.

So, the first time that I tried to learn Hebrew, I thought I would be real academic and learn Hebrew. And I found this online

program that was done with this gal who is actually an Israeli national. She grew up in Israel. Hebrew was her first language. And I was like, man, I'm going to learn Hebrew from her. And here's the problem. When you, when you try to learn a language, you actually have to work at it. And so, I was good until I had to work at it and then it was hard. Hebrew has this whole other alphabet; they don't even use the same letters. They don't even have the same sounds. It's hard. So, what I did was nothing. And I had this opportunity to have this gal who was my Hebrew teacher. She happened to be coming through the area and she asked me if I wanted her to come and do a teaching for some of the people in our church that I was like, yes, absolutely. So she came into this teaching and it was brilliant. It was incredible. And after it was over, she was on her way out to her car and we were walking out and visiting me and her and her husband and she said, Hey, you're not turning in your assignments. And I said, I know I really want to learn Hebrew, and she goes, no, you don't. And I was like, listen, lady, in my heart I said this, listen lady, you're not very big. You better be careful. She goes, no you don't. What I've learned is that the Israeli people are fearless and this is totally normal for her to say this to somebody. And I said, no, I really do. She goes, not from a Hebrew perspective, you don't. She was, if you wanted to learn Hebrew, you'd turn in your assignments. That's what would make me know that you wanted to learn Hebrew. Don't tell me what you want to know. Show me. And I was like, you're right.

From a biblical perspective, we know God when we experience him. I want to take a look at John chapter 4. This is a famous story where he meets a woman at the well and he tells her to go get her husband. She says, I don't have a husband. And he says, I know you've been married five times and the guy that you're with is not your husband. Which feels, like, that just feels a little judgy. But, that's another sermon for another day. And so what happens is she goes back to the village in Samaria. She goes back to the village and she says, come meet a man that told me everything that I ever did. And so people come and they believe in Jesus because of her testimony. I want to pick up the story there, because what's interesting here is what happens to the people as they become familiar with who Jesus is. Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony. He told me everything I ever did, so when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. And they said to the woman, it is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and we know that this is indeed the savior of the world. This is their perspective. Like the more they became familiar with Jesus, the more that they begin to believe in him because of who he was. They experienced him, they began to know him, and as they begin to know him, they begin to believe in him.

Now the second part of this chapter is about giving God a new name. And this is fun. In the Bible, any time that people

encounter God, they do one of three things: they dig a well, they set up a stone or, and or, they give God a new name. And this is really interesting because what that name does is that anchors the God that they believe, into an experience that they had with him that showed them a part of his character that they didn't know previously. God revealed himself in some way. And so now what I have to do is give him a name, to reflect this new piece of his character that I didn't know was there. Okay.

And so, what I want to do is look at Genesis 22 this is the story of Abraham getting ready to sacrifice his son Isaac. And here's what it says. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order and then bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. And then Abraham reached out his hand, took the knife to slaughter his son. The angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham, and again, this is one of those biblical moments. His name gets repeated to which we all should go, oh my word. This only happens seven times the entire Bible, four times in the old Testament, three times in the new Testament, four times in the old Testament, it's God, three times in the new Testament, it's Jesus. When someone's name gets repeated, God comes to them with a purpose of rerouting their whole life. This is a moment that is pivotal, a defining moment that will change their course. And he said, Abraham said, here I am. He said, do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him for now. I know that you fear God seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and he looked, and behold,

behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by his horns and Abraham went and took the Ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, the Lord will provide. He called it Jehovah Gyra. We say in English (inaudible) God is my provider. As it is said this day on the Mount of the Lord, it shall be provided. Now here's the fascinating thing about that whole story to me Abraham takes his son up on a mountain to sacrifice him. What blows Abraham away? And we know this because the name that he gives God isn't, there was no sheep, and then I raised the knife and then there was a sheep. That's not what blows him away. What blows him away in this moment was that this God that had asked him to sacrifice his son provides. This God isn't a God who takes and from Abraham's perspective at that point in history, that's a revolutionary God. This is a God who gives. This is a God who meets needs. This is a God who goes out of his way to to provide for people than what they could ever ask for. That's what this God is like. He's not a God who takes, he's a God who gives. So, Abraham gives him a name. What would be interesting for us to do this week at our life groups? Something that would be interesting for us to try, is based on your experience with God, maybe what name would you give him? You can use one of the names in the Bible. That's fine, but the Lord is what? The Lord is what for us? Maybe this week. That would be a great discussion to have in our life groups.

The third thing we need to say is that loving God means obeying him. Remember this, obedience is God's love language. We can say all day long. Yeah, I love God. Whatever words

come out of your mouth, your life is going to reveal exactly where you're at with the Lord and I gotta be honest with you, we fall into a trap of trying to label things as religious or not religious as Christian or not Christian. And I think maybe a better conversation would be whether or not we could actually start looking for people loving God being expressed in what we see, because there's a whole lot of people who wouldn't call themselves Christian, but what they're doing hums with reverence for God. And there's a whole lot of people who would call themselves Christian who brighten a room by leaving it. If you know what I'm talking about. Like the, the joy of the Lord is my strength. Those, like, loving God means obeying him. You don't have to, from a biblical perspective, you don't have to tell me that you believe in God. I will know when I watch your life. I'll know John 14:15 says, if you love me, you'll keep my commandments. John 14:21-- whoever has my commandments keeps them. He it is who loves me and he who loves me will be loved by my father and I'll love him and manifest myself to him. This is, it's simple and we don't need to overcomplicate that. Yeah, but what about this kid? What about this contingent? What about this condition? There's no loopholes to not loving God. Either you do or you don't. Either we obey him or we don't. There's no loopholes in that. Now, I thank God for his grace because I fail at that. I thank God for his grace, but in the trajectory of my life, when people look at my life and say, that's a guy who loves God, well, they'll know if I obey him.

There's three statements from the book that I think are particularly important in this regard. Okay, and these really significant, I think we need to hang on to them. The first statement is this, God is love and his will is always best. If you believe that God has loved, then whatever his will for his for you will come, be rooted in that love for you always be best. The second one is God is all knowing and his directions are always right. So God is love and his will is always best. But God is all knowing and his direction is always right. That's good news. It's not just that his love is best and, but he doesn't know where he's taking you. God is love and his will is always best and God is all knowing. So his directions are always right and God is all powerful. He can enable you to do his will. One of the things I love, and hate, about following God is that he asks us to walk in faith and we're going to talk about that a little bit more in a few weeks. But the thing about faith is, no matter how many steps of faith you've taken, they always take faith cause it's a step of faith. If it didn't take faith, it wouldn't be a step of faith. Which sounds really simple, but a lot of us are trying to get to the point in our life where we just kind of don't have to trust God anymore. We just do the right thing because we've been at this long enough that we've kinda got it figured out. That's not what God wants. Every time that God comes in invites you to something else, what he will do is remind you that it's going to take his power to pull it off. And every step of faith that he asks us to take, no matter what it is, no matter where he takes us, and it's different for different people, but you're going to have a little bit of a pucker factor. Like you're going to be like, Oh, I don't know. This might fail. This might colossally flop. Yeah, it

might. But if it's God's will, if it's God inviting you to take that step, he can help you. He can empower you to pull it off. Because the truth is, it's not you that's doing it -- it's his power at work in you.

Okay, let's keep going. Number four, God invites us to join him in his work. I love this because here's the thing, we try to cook up stuff that we need to do for God. And I, and I gotta be honest with you, I'm struggling with this right now in the midst of the world that we're living in. I'm trying to figure out how to get ahead of where we're going so that we can anticipate and react and respond. And, and I think there's, uh, there's a place for planning in the world. It may be that all the planning got dumped into my head. I don't know for sure, but here's what I know. I'm probably the least adaptable person in the whole world. I love change, as long as it's my idea. I didn't plan when we came here. Now let me say this, first of all, I didn't plan to move from where we were to come here. And I certainly didn't believe that I was ever going to live in Parker, Colorado, and I love it here. I don't regret that, but I didn't ever plan on that. And I thought that I had given up enough. Like I had had enough adaptability for a decade, but I didn't anticipate a global pandemic. So then that happened and now we're like, this gets in the way of my plans and it's a wrestling match because at one level I'm like, yes, God has it all under control. I know and Covid didn't surprise him, but it surprised the heck out of me. And so I got to figure out how to deal with, here's the thing, one of the things that God has really been raking me over the coals with, just in my own personal relationship with

him is like, Hey, whose plan is it? And I'm like, God, I have really good things planned for you. Like, do you know how many people we could tell about you? And he's like, do you know how many more would be told if you just shut up and be a part of what I'm doing?

It is so hard for me cause my plans are good. I've really good ideas. Just ask me. So good ideas and yet I find myself even considering the possibility that my ideas might be worth comparing with God's ideas. That's why I love the end of Ephesians 3 and I quoted all the time to him who is able to do immeasurably more than we could ever think or imagine to him be the praise and the glory forever and ever. Amen. It really immeasurably more than I, cause I could think of some really big things. I've big, big dreams, big dreams for God, like if he would just be a part of what I want and yet God's invitation isn't for us to cook up good things for him. God's invitation is for us to join him in his work. John 5, Jesus says this, it says, Jesus answered him, my father is working until now and I am working. Jesus is being accused of healing on the Sabbath. He did a miracle on the Sabbath. They're like, you can't heal on the Sabbath. That's work. Now they're completely forgetting that this person who had a withered hand got to stretch out their hand and it worked again like, oh my goodness, this is a person who gets to inter back into some level of normalcy. You worked on the Sabbath like, God can't possibly be glorified by that and Jesus is like, look I, my father is always working. I'm just being a part of what he's doing. And so they challenge him on it. So then it says, Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, the son

can do nothing of his own accord, but he only does what he sees the father . For whatever the father does, that's what the son does, likewise. Jesus says, his comment to the Pharisees is, look, you can say that I shouldn't be able to do it cause your rules say so, but God was at work here. The only thing I can do is join him in what he's doing and I promise you this, if you choose to be really serious about following the Lord and just being a part of what he's doing, what will happen is there'll be a lot of people in the churchy world that do this. They'll raise their eyebrows at you cause they don't know how to handle what you're doing. There's nothing wrong with that. With people loving God and understanding them through certain constructs. We just need to always remember that this is about God. It's his world. It's his agenda. It's his plan. It's not about us upholding our traditions, and that's what Jesus is saying to these guys. God is going to invite us to be part of his work.

Okay? Now, last point. Here we go, number five. We need to know where God is at work before we can respond to him. Okay, so how do we know that? How do we know where God's at work? What we want to look for in the world is things that are going on that only God can do, okay? Things that are going on that only God can do. God's not trying to be elusive. He's not trying to hide behind a Bush and be like, hide behind the bush. That's not what God's like. God's not trying to hide from you. God wants to reveal himself and he reveals himself in the world by doing things that only he can do. In the workbook, it's kind of cool. There's a list of those things. There's some things that only God can do. Number one, only God can draw people to

himself. So when, by the way, this is a conversation that you need to be really sensitive to right now in this time in the , because there's a whole lot of people having a whole lot of conversations around who God is right now that were not having that conversation two months ago. Like this is a ripe opportunity for us because only God can draw people to himself. In fact, in John 6, Jesus says, no one can come to the father unless the father draws him. This is what's going on. Like if you see someone asking questions about God, this is God's invitation to you to join him in that party. And what'll happen is immediately we'll, we'll start... but, but I, I don't know enough. I don't, I don't ... Listen, if God wasn't smart enough to know that what you had to offer was exactly what he needed, like we could maybe have that conversation, but God puts you in a position with this person who he's already been working on. He plows the soil. He does all the work in their heart. The person brings up God to a person who says they believe in God and then they don't have the courage to say something so that that person can begin to know who God is personally. Only God draws people to himself. So when you see people asking questions about God, that's your invitation to join him.

Number two, God causes people to seek after him. Nobody seeks God on their own. God wakes that up. That's what the Bible says over and over again.

Number three, God reveals spiritual truth. The Holy spirit illumines us.

Number four, God convicts the world of guilt regarding sin. By the way, only God can do that. You need to be looking for spaces in your world where you can make that statement. But here's the thing, just as a parent, I would love to play the role of the Holy spirit in my kid's life. I would love to convict them of sin. And sin essentially means anything that I didn't want them to do. You know, you ate the last piece of pizza, you're sinful. Whatever it is, it's not my job. It's God's part in their life. And so when there is conviction over something that they've done wrong, that's not any like great parenting network, that's God working in their life. And we need to be aware of it.

Number five, God convicts the world of righteousness, the desire to do what's right. God does that. God convicts the world of sin, God convicts the world of righteousness and God convicts the world of judgment. Like we don't have to be judgy. These are things that only God can do. So when you see that showing up in someone's life, that is God's invitation to you to join him in that relationship because he's already working there.

And, by the way, if you want to be a part of what God's doing in the world, it's way easier to see what God's doing and just go be a part of it than it is to convince God to come be a part of what you want to do. It's just way easier and it takes all the pressure off.

So I have all kinds of implications for this sermon, but want to leave us with four today. Implication number one, the biblical

names of God are a reflection of his character. That's why they're so important. And you can find a list of those like you can Google list of the names of God. If you're curious about that, what are they? And to really consider that, like what does it mean that God is our provider like in the world that we're living in right now? What does it mean that God is our provider? What does it mean that the Lord is our banner, that the Lord is our healer, that the Lord is whatever, whatever the name is, what does it mean? What does that reveal about God's character and do we really trust that... it's a great conversation?

Second implication, when we experience God through obedience, we learn to love him and to know his character. We only learn to, to know who God is through experience and we experience him when we obey him. Like you can't, there's only, it's kind of like, do you remember if you'd been married for awhile? Do you remember when you were engaged? Some of you guys are like, man, no, I know that was long time ago. We went through premarital counseling. My wife and I -- because we wanted to have our marriage all figured out before we got into it. So we went to premarital counseling cause we wanted to get it all figured out and we just, the premarital counselor, the person that was doing our premarital counseling, um, said these crazy things. Like, you know, sometimes you're going to be so angry at each other that you won't want to talk at all. And we were like, I remember we walked out of that session and I looked at my fiancé' at the

time and I was like, I will never be like that with you. I can't, I just love you so much. And she was like, I know I love you so much too. So, we got through premarital counseling and were like, we're probably going to have the best marriage ever because based on what he's saying, we're, we have this nailed. And then we got married and all of a sudden she became a different person. I don't know what happened to her. I, I was good. I don't know what happened to her. Like this whole, there's this thing like, it's like people who don't have kids that try to have an opinion about parenting a toddler in a store. And if you've had kids, you know this, like every toddler will do this to you, at least once in your life. They, they will decide while you're in a grocery store, and it's usually you've been in there awhile and they wanted some things and they didn't get it. And you're finally, you're already frustrated, it's raising, and then you're finally at the checkout line and they see the impulse buy candy stand and they want a candy bar and you say, no, and I don't know what happens to them. It just happens and you're like, ah, and it's humiliating and then somebody who's never had a kid looks at you and goes, Oh, you need to deal with your child. Right? Like I was a good parent until I had children and now I'm just happy to get dressed in the morning. There's, only so much that you can know without the experience. There's only so much you can know about being married without the experience of being married. There's only so much you can know about being a parent without the experience of being a parent. There's only so much you can know about a relationship with the Lord without just experiencing a relationship with the Lord. Like how much does he have to do to show you how

much he loves you? When we experience God through obedience, we learn to love him and know his character. If you could see God for who he really is, you'd love him. And we learn that as we walk with him. It's, it's amazing to me. Like we, um, we can ascend to the truth that God is love, but it's in those moments of profound failure in our own life where God loves us anyway, that we learn how deep and how wide is the love of God as Paul writes, like that's, we learned that through our experience, through our journey.

Third implication, God invites us to partner with him in his work. We don't have to cook it up for him. God doesn't go, Hey, would you do something for me? And I'll just bless it. God says, I have an agenda in the world and I would love for you to be a part of it. Good news is that takes the pressure off. The bad news is that means that we've gotta be willing to lay our plans down to be a part of what he's doing because his plans are better than ours because God is love and his will is always best. And because God is all knowing and his directions are always right and because God is all powerful and he wants to empower us to do his will.

Fourth implication, when we see things that only God can do when we see these things that only God can do going on, he's showing us where he wants us to join him in his work. And so if there's somebody in your world right now like, Hey, you go to church, don't ya? Yeah, I go to church, man. Tell me about where God's at and all this stuff 'cause I got like a million

questions. Please don't miss that. That isn't like a, “wow that was incidentally coincidental”. That is God inviting you to join him in his work, in that person's heart. It's God, inviting you to be a part of his business. Don't miss those opportunities.

We're going to move towards communion and we take communion every week as a church family. Communion is this opportunity for us to remember the sacrifice that's happened to help us be able to, to have relationship with God. This infinite act of love where Jesus says, Hey, I just want to remind you how much I'm for you and how much I love you. And so as we take communion, I would just invite us to wrestle with a couple of things. First thing would be like, in the world of planning, how are you doing it? Submitting your plans to God's plans. Like I think we can all agree that we've all experienced a bit of a hiccup in the world right now. How are we doing at submitting our plans to God's plans? And I'm not saying that God caused coronavirus. What I'm saying is that right now God has a pathway for us to get through this. Do we keep trying to get out ahead of him and figure it out or are we just sitting back and being at peace and letting God work out the details? Cause here's the one thing I know for every great plan that I have, I cannot make this end faster than it's going to end. And so in the meantime, my job is to sit in and rest in the grace of God. And in his peace. Where are you letting your plans get in the way of God's plans? And then here's the other thing that I would wrestle with, like Jesus died to make this relationship with us possible. Where or who are you seeing God at work in and are you joining him there or are you sitting back and waiting?

Cause here's what I can know to be true. If you're not going to act on what God's already shown you, there is absolutely no reason for God to show you any more of himself and he'll just keep bringing us back to that same point until we're willing to move past it. Once we're willing to move past it, there's new spaces for God to take us. But what has God shown you already that you're not being faithful to act on? Let's sit with that for a minute. As we consider communion.

On the night Jesus was betrayed, he took the bread and he broke it and he said, this is my body which is given for you. So whenever you eat this bread, do it in remembrance of me. And then, after the dinner, he took a cup and he said, this cup, this represents the blood of the covenant which is shed for you. So whenever you drink this cup, do it in remembrance of me.

Let's pray. God, thank you. Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for the desire that you have for us to know you and to be in relationship with us. And that that relationship goes before us and behind us and around us in it. It takes care of everything that we could get stressed out about because of who you are, you've already got all this stuff worked out. And so Lord, I pray that in the midst of where we are today, God, that you would sit very closely with us, let us know that you're right beside us and that you haven't bailed out on us and that you have plans to work even in the midst of the incredible times that we're in. Lord, remind us that we want to be a part of your plans, that your plans are better, that we don't have to

make anything up, but that we can rest in your desires for us in your name. Amen. Let's sing one more song.

Woo, man. I was shouting. Ooh, that's good. What a promise. You turn bones into armies. You turn graves into gardens, you're turning seas into highways and all those are just actually stories that happened. No big deal. Like that's not some hypothetical thing. It happened. And because that's true. We don't ever have to worry about cooking something up for God because can you possibly come up with anything better than turning bones into armies? I mean, I come up with cool things, but that one kind of outshines them. I hope this week that we can learn to not, not only pursue a relationship with God, but to trust that his directions are the best and to be able to rest and find peace in that. Thanks for tuning in. I hope you have a great week.