

Experiencing God

#9 – Experiencing God through obedience

May 31, 2020

We're here. Hi family. I'm so glad we're here. I've been preaching to darkness for 10 weeks. We had like legit and ghost town. Ah, so nice to see you. Thank you for coming and thank you for trusting us with the first Sunday back. I know that you take a risk when you step in here in a situation like this and you didn't really know what you were going to step into, but, what I can tell you is our staff... If you see our staff, give them like an elbow and a virtual hug, like a distance hug, what is that? When you walk by and go, "Hey," which means I would hug you if it wasn't a pandemic going on. Make sure you do that for the staff they've worked their tails off to get us ready for today. Especially, our creative team and our operations team. I mean, all the signs in and the logistics. In the middle of that, we started doing some replacing of some of our video equipment. We thought we were going to have a few more weeks to do that while you guys were all not here. Collin and Eric have been just working so hard back there doing that. It's been amazing. I'm so thankful to be a part of our team here tonight. I had this hunch about a month ago that when churches got reopened, it was just going to be dumped on us. All of the sudden we're going to be surprised they're open again. But with all these restrictions and guidelines that were going to force us to make a bunch of adjustments and shift arounds, right. Which is exactly what happened, the Friday before Memorial Day weekend. Sunday, within 20 minutes of Trump's announcement, I started getting phone calls and emails. Hey, what time are services on Sunday? We don't even know what we're working with yet. So, this was a long week. I'm so proud of our team. So proud of our team and they worked hard on this and we're excited to be here. Out of this whole last 10 weeks, I hope three things: Number one, I hope that this never happens again. That's my hope. This is crazy. It's the most unstable time in my life that I remember. And it wasn't even that things were literally so bad. It was that it seemed like every day and maybe even still at some level, it seemed like every day, like the floor, the bottom just keeps getting lower. How bad is this going to get before we turn it around? And, you know, it's just this incredibly unstable time. I'll talk more about this later, but just so that, there is no Bible college class on how to lead a church through a global pandemic. At least if there was, I didn't take it. I was like, what are the odds of that? So, this has been this just incredible time that I hope we never experience again, ever. A number two thing that I hope is, I hope that when we come in here, that we understand and value, really value, how important worship is, especially corporate worship and that we don't ever take that for granted. We have like a Holy Spirit throwdown in here where we take seriously what it means to tell the Lord who he is to us. The third thing that I hope is, and I'm gonna keep saying this, is that we recognize, and that it shifts our mind that when churches shut down on Sunday morning, they weren't shut down. They were deployed. I just want to tell you straight up, and these stories will be coming over the next few weeks. But, the things that we've been able to see happen during quarantine, like people in the name of Jesus, serving other people sometimes really simple ways, sometimes really incredible ways. And watching people say yes to Jesus during the shut in, at home. Who'd think that we started ... I don't know if you know this, we started 24 life groups during quarantine. Yeah. So, there were 24 leaders that were like, you know what? I can't wait for another zoom call in my week, so, what I'm going to do is I'm going to start investing in people that I haven't really met yet. And we're going to build relationships together virtually, and it's going to be amazing. And like, just, just cool. The stories are just cool. God has been at work so incredibly. The fact that we get to be a part of it, I'm like, who am I that I get to be a part of this. I feel so fortunate to be a part of the Southeast family and your faithfulness. And I want to say this. Because of your faithfulness. there's

a lot more to this story that I would love to share with you, but I can't, I can't -- just because of the players that are involved, but, we were able to keep three churches funded.

Yeah. That are not us. And specifically, there were three inner city, African American churches, which I was really excited to be a part of that. I just am so proud of your faithfulness in the most unstable time that I can remember in my life. You guys have been faithful. And because of that, we've been asking questions about how we can help people. How can we make a difference in people's lives? How can we help organizations? How can we help ministries rather than having conversations about who do we keep and who do we lay off? We haven't had to have those conversations. And there's a lot of people who have and that's directly because of your faithfulness. And I'm so I'm so proud of you and I'm so proud to be associated with this church. It's pretty amazing!

That being said, because we're back together again, if you want to give your offerings here, you can. But we're not going to pass the bags cause we don't want you to touch nothing. Don't touch anything. There's black metal boxes hung on the walls at all the exits out of here at any one of those. You can drop your offerings off in there if you want to. And we'll make sure that those get to the right place. I'm just so, so, so, so appreciative of you guys, one of the things that I want to make you aware of, and then, and then we'll jump into the sermon. You guys remember a few weeks ago, some of my favorite people from Treasure House of Hope did a bread sale here. Remember that? And you drove by and you bought a loaf of bread and you didn't have to get out of your car. You don't have to put a mask on, there'll be all taken care of. You didn't have to put a mask on it, any place I can go where I don't have to wear a mask right now is a step in the right direction for me. So, they're gonna do the same thing. You drive through, you get the bread and then you have this kind of like out of body experience cause the bread. So good. You remember, you remember -- they're going to do it again this Saturday from 10 to 2 in our parking lot. Same process, you can drive by, you can buy bread. If you're like I don't eat bread -- I I'm personally, I'm not allowed to eat bread right now because I ate too much bread when I was a kid. And so now I can't, I don't eat bread. But what I can do is take the bread and buy it and give it to SECOR whose demands for SECOR's needs are astronomical right now they have car lines out of whack wrapped around the parking lot and out into the street almost every day. And so it's crazy how many families they're helping, which is great, but you can buy it and then go and donate it to SECOR and help them to be able to have stuff to give to the families that are in need. And that need is really great. And so that'll happen this week. More information will be coming out on our social media. That'd be happening Saturday, June the sixth from 10 to 2. I really encourage you to swing by and take care of getting the old bread fix. All right. So that's it for announcements.

We are going to tie down this series and then we're going to jump into week nine of experiencing God. And here's the truth. I'm so ready to be done with this series. Here's why-- it's been a great series and we've covered a lot of ground. It's been really useful, but the problem is, for me, I started studying for the next series about four or five weeks ago. And so all the stuff that I've been studying, I'm like, Oh, this is so good. I can't wait. And so I want to talk to you about that, and I will, but in a few weeks, right. But because I got to finish this one, if it was left up to me, I'm so glad that I don't control my world. If it was left up to me, I would give you half of a series and be like, Oh, I'm bored with that. Let's do something else. And I'll give you get, I'm really excited about this series. I'm bored with it. And then we moved to the next one and then I'd be like, I should probably go back and finish this one. So it would be a whole lot of not finishing anything if I was left up to it. What I've learned in my life is that following through and finishing a whole thing is actually a good discipline in life. For things like, I don't know, a job or marriage. I'm really excited about starting our new series. It's going to be so good.

Where we've been with experiencing God is we've been talking about what it means to have a relationship with the Lord in a way where we can really understand when God is communicating to us. And what does that mean? And where do we go with that? So at the beginning of the series, what we talked about was that if you're going to have a relationship with God, you have to understand from the get go that Jesus gets to be the boss. Like, he's either the boss or he's nothing. And that's what we have to understand from the get go. If we try to make it -- for a lot of people, they want to say, yes, I believe in Jesus so that they don't have to go to hell or because they want to live a blessed life or something like that. And, and all those are fine. But if you try to make God a part of your life, that gives you the good things, but doesn't carry any responsibility with it, then God is nothing. He's either everything or he's nothing. And if we don't know that going in, then we're never going to be able to have the kind of relationship with the Lord that's alive and vibrant.

So, then we talked about what that looks like and how do we know when God is speaking to us? And we talked about the seven kind of languages that God uses to speak to us. His primary dialect is the Bible. If you're ever going to be able to consistently hear from the Lord, it's going to be rooted in the scripture. You're going to have to have a good foundation in the word of God. That's just the reality of it. Then we had the three PS -- people, prompting and pain, and then we had the three DS -- doors desires and dreams. These are the seven languages that God uses to speak to us. Then we talked about after that, the crisis of belief that when God comes and speaks to you, you're going to have to make some decisions, but you can't stay where you are and go with God.

Then we talked last week about adjustments. We're gonna have to make some adjustments to our life. Today where we're going to land this plane and we're going to talk about the connection between my obedience to God and my connectedness to God. That when I obey God, I'm connected to him. And when I disobey God, I'm disconnecting from him. Now God doesn't go anywhere. But I do. And, the good news about that is that that's my, that's my choice. Like I get to come back to God and he's so willing to forgive. I want to begin in John 14 this morning. And John 14 is part of the, what we know as the last supper. Jesus is trying to prepare his guys to be without him. And what's happening here is Jesus is getting ready to be arrested and then crucified and ultimately raised from the dead. But he's trying to help his guys be okay with the fact that he's going to be taken from them. And what he's saying to them is, I'm leaving, but I'm not leaving. Like I'm going to not be here physically, but I'm going to be with you. And let me explain to you how that works. It's kind of what he's trying to do in John 14. So, we're gonna start at verse 18 and read down through verse 24. Here's what it says. It says, "I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you yet a little while. And the world will see me no more, but you will see me because I live. You also will live. And in that day, you will know that I am in the father and you and me and I am in you." Which is this weird, like, what does that even mean? Here's, what Jesus is saying. He's saying, look, you and me, we're connected. And God, the father and me were connected. And because you're connected to me, you can be connected to the father. So, the way to get connected to God the Father is to stay connected to Jesus. And here's what he says. Here's how, "whoever has my commandments and keeps them it is he who loves me." Like this is so simple. So, I guess it's not even hard to stay connected to Jesus. And if you're connected to Jesus, you can be connected to the father. The way that we stay connected to Jesus is that we keep his commandments "and he who loves me will be loved by my father. And I love him and manifest myself to them. And then Judas (not Iscariot)" I think that's hilarious that he had to throw that one in and then Judas, not the jerk, not that one. "He said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not the world? And Jesus answered. If

anyone loves me, he'll keep my word. And my father will love him and will come to him." You remember that? He's already said this once. He says it again: "If you love me, you'll keep my word and we'll come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my word. And the word that you hear is not mine, but the father's who sent me". This is God's idea for you, if you stay connected to me, into my teachings, if you obey my teachings, then you're connected to me and I'm connected to the father. And so, because of that, you can be connected to the father. We connect to the father through Jesus and we connect to Jesus through obedience. So, our obedience leads us to connection with God. And so I want to work through the five days of unit nine. A lot of people have asked me in this process, why aren't we doing units 10, 11, and 12 of the workbook. Remember we've been working through this workbook, Experiencing God written by Henry Blackaby. A lot of people have been asking me why don't we work through units 10, 11, and 12? Why are we just doing one through nine? Well, here's why because units one through nine, Henry Blackaby is really biblical. Units 10, 11, and 12, Henry Blackaby is really Baptist. And that doesn't make him unbiblical, not even a little bit, but what it does is that the topics that he's covering in those are way more open for debate and interpretation. And so rather than trying to tackle all those, we wouldn't even get through the introductory work to try to properly understand the units if we did them. So we do units one through nine, and then we call it a day. If you want to do the workbook units 10, 11, and 12, they're great. There's nothing wrong with them. But, we're going to focus just on units one through nine in this series. And I'm really excited to get to the next series. I already said that. So unit nine day one, this is what he says. We learn who God is and what he's like through obedience. We learn who God is and what he's like through our obedience. And 1 John 2:3-6, by the way, same author as the passage we just read. And John 14, this is what he says. "And by this, we know that we've come to know him." How do you know that? You've come to know God simply if we keep his commandments, but, whoever says I know him, but does not keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word in him, truly the love of God is perfected by this. We may know that we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him, ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. And this is such a Jewish thing for John to say too, if anyone claims to be in Christ, he has to walk as Jesus walked. Here's what he means in the Western American world. If I want to know how you're doing, what do I ask you? How are you doing? We're starting with simple questions. It's the first week back. I'm trying to not be confusing. If I want to know how you're doing, what do I ask you? How are you doing? And you say something like good or fine or bad or pensive or distraught or melancholy or any number of other things that you choose. But what they all have in common is that they immediately remove us from the concrete, physical world into an abstract conversation about philosophies and feelings. And there's no way for me to see whether or not that's actually true. So when I say, how are you doing? And you're like, good, but your life could be a train wreck, right? But I don't know that because you said good in the Jewish world, they won't ask you. If they want to know how you're doing, they don't ask you how you're doing. What they ask you is "how's your walk or how are you walking?" The idea of it is God creates a path, right? This is all through the scripture. Your word is a light to my feet, a lamp unto my feet and a light for what? For my path -- God gives us a path. And then his word illuminates, how we walk it. So we've got a path and my charge and following God is to walk that path. And so the question is, how are you walking now? I'm having a concrete conversation. And this is what John says, whoever abides in him, whoever claims to be in Christ ought to walk the way Jesus walked. You ought to be able to see it. We're not talking about perfection, but we're talking about walking as Jesus walked. That's what Jesus, that's what John is saying, which says a lot about how I examine my own life. Not like, you know, what's so funny is that when we try to assess like relatively, how am I doing personally? When I'm looking at my own self, it's always like, well, I'm not a mass murderer. My standard for good, for myself is Jeffrey Dahmer, my standard for, for other people is mother Teresa. Have you ever noticed that? Like, I, I'm not killing anybody, but you better have your stuff together. You know? Like that's, that's how we measure all this stuff. But what John is saying is

look, anybody who claims to be in Christ, out of walk, as Jesus walked, like, that's, that is the measuring rod. How are we doing? How am I doing? As I look in the mirror, my walking as Jesus walked, but tandem to that, who am I letting speak truth into my life? Because the truth is they can be, espousing all kinds of biblical principles that they've learned, but if they don't walk like Jesus walked, it doesn't matter. They don't know him.

Number two, obedience means uninterrupted fellowship with God. Okay? So let's talk about this. Obedience means connection with God. Disobedience means disconnection with God. Let me give you these couple of examples of how this works. Remember in the garden, Adam and Eve, they eat the fruit and then they go and hide, right? And then God, who are they? Who are they hiding from? Yeah, let's treat it like a small group. It's just an intimate, small. Who are they hiding from? God. Yeah. There's not a lot of other people there at this point in the story. That was funny. So, so they're hiding and God comes and walks in the garden and he says, Hey, where are you now? Does God need to ask that question? No, he knows everything. So who's he asking it for? He's asking it for Adam and Eve, right? Because there's not a lot of other people around to talk to. That would have been funny if there was, I'm not really talking to you guys, but since you freaked out, we'll give you my attention. I guess I hadn't been even the only ones they're like, where are you? And then Adam says, we're hiding, which is a bad way to stay hidden. Right? We're hiding from you over here, behind the bush. Don't look. And then God says, why are you hiding now? Does he need to ask that question? No, he doesn't. So who's he asking it for? Them. Because there's not a lot of other people around, right? And Adam says, well, we're hiding because we're naked. And he says, well, who told you that? And Adam realizing his predicament does the honorable thing and says that woman, you gave me, she made me do it. Right? Here's why, because this is what sin always does. Sin causes us to hide from God. And it disconnects us from other people. Sin always does that. It disconnects us from other people. It disconnects us from God. And it disconnects us. Disconnects us from people as well. Sin always does this. It always does. This obedience helps us stay connected to God. Disobedience always disconnects us. If you remember the story of Jonah – Jonah, is a prophet of God, which means that Jonah, here's the voice of God in ways that a lot of us don't like he has a kind of a special connection to God in his speaking, because God uses Jonah as a prophet to be able to speak his truth into the lives of other people. And so God says, Jonah, I want you to go to Nineveh to get the fish slappers. If you remember the VeggieTales video -- go preach to them, we're going to turn a whole city around. And Jonah goes, that's a terrible idea. That's a terrible idea. I'm going to go to Tarshish, which is the opposite direction. By the way, Tarshish means paradise. Jonah wants his relationship with God to take him to paradise just like 38 special. Well, why don't you take me back to paradise? Right? True. They called it the Jonah's song. That's what they should have called it. Jonah wants his relationship with the Lord to take him to paradise. The problem is God's not in paradise, God's in Nineveh. And there's some lessons for us in that, because I think for a lot of us, if we're honest, we've been staring down the barrel of a lot of Nineveh's in our life that we didn't want to go because we wanted our relationship with the Lord to take us to paradise. But the problem is God's not in paradise, God's in Nineveh. And until we're willing to meet him there, we will never understand why he's invited us there in the first place. And so he gets swallowed by a fish and then he decides that he's going to be obedient. So then he gets sent to Nineveh and we're going to pick the story up there in chapter three of Jonah. And we're going to read through what happens there. So Jonah began to go into the city going a day's journey. And he called out yet 40 days and Nineveh shall be overthrown. And the people of Nineveh believed God. So Jonah disconnected from God, gets swallowed by a fish. Jonah connected with God, turns around a whole city, 120,000 people. Here's the deal. Here's what I know. Any modern preacher that preaches one message and turns around a whole city of 120,000 people would write a book about it. Jonah does not write a book about it. Let's keep reading. It says "they called for a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them. And the word reached the King of

Nineveh. And then he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the King and his Nobles, let neither man or beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and let them call out mightily to God that everyone turned from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger so that we may not perish. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them. And he did not do it." I love that because obedience to God is connection with God. Okay. It's true in Jonah's story. It's true in the Ninevites. What's so funny about that story is that it ends in literally the worst possible place that it could end, like Jonah preaches a message. The whole city turns, and then he gets mad at God. So he goes up and why does he get mad at God? Because his preaching worked. Wrestle with that one. God, I was faithful. And you did exactly what you said you were going to do. And now I'm mad about it. And so he goes up and sits on the Hill and he's like, God, why did you do this? And God goes, Jonah. I had to do it. There was 120,000 people and cows the end. Which I think, this is the Aaron couch interpretive commentary: I think it's because God loves a good ribeye. Like you know what I'm saying? God loves a steak. That's just what I think. 120,000. I got to like, no word, no word, not dripping with the presence of the Holy spirit, right? 120,000 people and cows, the end. Jonah experiences being used by God and being connected to God when he's faithful. But when he turns his back on God, when he's disobedient, he experiences disconnection and that truth will be true for you as well. When we're obedient to God, we continually have connection with him. When we're not, then we wind up missing it.

Number three, God works through us and we're blessed. I love this truth that when God works through me, the person that God is ministering to through me is blessed. But the truth is I'm blessed too. Like, when someone has something's happened, someone passes away or they're in the hospital or there's trauma or something and I get to step into that situation and pray with them and hurt with them and watch the Holy spirit, give comfort to them. They get comforted. They get to feel the Holy spirit in that moment. But the truth is, there's something that changes in me when I'm part of that. Like there's a better version of Jesus that lives in me as a result of those moments. And the problem is when you do that, it's kind of like taking drugs and like you, you come out of there like, Oh my gosh, that was amazing. I've never experienced anything like that before. And pastors love to keep that to themselves, right? Like they need me, they need me to step in and be the, the Jesus in this moment. Yeah. Now the truth is they need the Holy spirit and I just get to be the one who gets to be the conduit for that maybe, but anybody could do it. And in the process of that, we all become a little bit more like Jesus, like in my marriage, the longer that we're together, and, my wife is stuck and I just serve her. Or I'm stuck and my wife just serves me. Somewhere in the midst of that, trying to be Jesus to one another, like a better version of Jesus lives in us, both. And was it because I was serving or because of receiving? And the answer is yes, it's both of those things that as we learn to be in relationship, healthy spaces where we're able to give and take, we start to experience God's healing and freedom on both sides of that court. So, God uses us and we get blessed. I love Genesis 12: God comes to Abraham and he says, Hey, Abraham, I'm gonna make you so rich so that you can be a blessing to all the nations. Like Abraham's wealth was never about him. It was about him being a blessing to other people. By the way, I think that's true of our wealth too. Like God making us wealthy or not really isn't about us being wealthy or not. It's about how we steward it to be a blessing to other people. All people. Luke 10, we see a really cool passage. What happens is Jesus sends out 72 people and he empowers them to heal sicknesses and to deliver demons and all this stuff. He says, speak peace on the house and then tell them the kingdom of God is near. And then verse 17, they come back and here's what it says. It says the 72 returned with joy saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. And he said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from

heaven. Let me ask you a question. Does anybody in here want to see Satan fall like lightning from heaven in our culture? Luke 10 tells us how. And by the way, none of it happened within the four walls of the church. It was Jesus' followers being deployed into their community and having one on one conversations about who Jesus is. And it changed spiritually, changed the environment. And then he says, behold, I've given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, you're not to rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. And I think it's in the book of Mark. It may be in Matthew, but I think it's in the book of Mark where this situation happens. That's in Matthew, it's in Matthew or this situation happens. And then the next story is Jesus feeding the 5,000, because what happens is they come back and they're like, Jesus, we delivered sicknesses. Or we healed sicknesses. We deliver demons. And we did this and we did this and we did this and we did this. And Jesus was like, Oh, that's incredible, man. Congratulations. And then the next story is, there's 5,000 people that are hungry and the apostles come to Jesus and they're like, Jesus, do something they're hungry. And so Jesus looks at him and goes, you give them something to eat. Oh, by the way, don't forget who it was that was actually doing the delivering of the demons and the healing of the sicknesses. Like the only thing good that lives in me is Jesus at work. That's the only thing.

Number four, God reveals himself by what he does. Like he reveals his character. He reveals his nature in Exodus 3, Moses is out tending sheep and he looks, and he sees a bush that is on fire. And now the fact that the bush is on fire is not what surprises him, come with me to Israel and I'll explain to you why. What surprises him about it is that the bush is not being consumed. The bush on fire is nothing new to him. But fact that it's not being consumed is odd. And so he goes over to it and the bush says, take your shoes off, you're on Holy ground. So he does. Cause that's what you do when a bush tells you to take your shoes off, you take your shoes off. And so God has this conversation with Moses and he says, Moses, I'm going to use you to go to Egypt and deliver my people. And Moses goes, that is a terrible idea. And so they get into this debate. Now, does God need to debate this topic? No. So who's the debate for, for Moses. Yeah. Good job. Because there's not a lot of other people around, I mean more than Adam and Eve at the time, but it's still not a lot around. Not a lot of people here in this conversation. And so Moses starts to have this, he starts to kind of quiz God and pray and make him prove himself. In verse 13, here's what it says. And then Moses said to God, if I come to the people of Israel and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you and they ask me, what is his name then? What shall I tell him? Now what Moses is asking for here is way more than God's tag. Because in the Jewish world, your name is a description of your character. It's a description of who you are. And so what Moses is asking God to give him is, God, what authority gives you the ability to give me some kind of guarantees that if I take this step of faith with you, I'm not going to die. Gimme some kind of a thing that's going to take away my need to trust you. In other words, God says to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, say to this, to the people of Israel, I am sent me to you. And that word is, it's a tenseness word. What that means is, I was who I was, I am who I am and I'll be who I will be. So if they need to have a description of my character, tell him whatever -- that's crazy. But what Moses has to learn is that when God invites you into his work, you got to have a step of faith before you learn God's character. God's character's proven. True. It has been a thousand times. So, when he asked you to step out in faith, know that on the other side of it, his character will be there for you, but you've got to be faithful first. And that matters because if you want all your T's crossed and your I's dotted before you take the first step, that's not faith. That's not faith. And so what God says is my name is whatever. Just don't worry about it. Do what I'm telling you. And because Moses was, he got to experience some pretty cool things.

Number five, God will never give us an assignment that he won't enable us to complete. Now he'll give you all kinds of assignments you can't do by yourself, but he will never give you an assignment that he won't enable us to complete. Let me give you a real time example just in my own life. Like I said earlier, there's no Bible college class on how to lead a church through a global pandemic. I didn't move to Parker to lead a church through a global pandemic. I moved here for rainbows and unicorns. I moved here for 311 days of sunshine a year. I've moved here for other reasons and that, but like, when this started shaking down, people kept asking, where's this headed? Where is it going? And how bad is it going to get? And what's the church going to do and how, and I'm like, I don't know anything. And I hate not knowing. Everything, I hate not knowing. And so there's a lot of people said to me like this last week, they're like, Oh, it wasn't that bad. Like, the whole quarantine thing. It wasn't that bad. I was like, Oh, shaken. Like I was, I was rattled. Because you know, what if it fails and what if we don't do good? And what if, what if, what if, what if I was scared to death? And then, somebody came to me. I don't even remember who it was. Okay. Two people in one day that came to me and they said, God wants you to know that he brought you here just so you could lead us through this. And I was like, woo, because I don't feel adequate for that task. Like this has been hard. And what I love about my relationship with the Lord is guys like, you're not adequate, but I am the same I am as I am today. God will never give us an assignment that he wouldn't enable us to complete. And I'm so thankful for that because gosh, I would really mess you guys up, like give a, be embarrassing for you. If you're following along in your notes, there's a passage there in Acts 16 that we're not going to take time to read, but it's a great passage about Paul's Macedonian call and the fact that he was able to step into such an incredible ministry and do things that there's no way that any man could do, because he was willing to take the risk, to follow God to an unknown area, an area he'd never been before.

So I have some implications, lots of implications, but I want to give you four. Number one, God reveals his character as we follow him. No, he does that in a couple of ways. Number one, God reveals his character in the fact that as we are obedient to his rules, we realize that his rules aren't just arbitrarily there to control us. His rules are there to reveal his nature. Like we don't murder because God has life. We don't commit adultery because God has love. We don't covet because God is generous. We don't lie because God is truth. Does that make sense? The rules that God gives us, aren't just there because he's bigger and stronger than us. They're there because they help us understand his nature, who he is and what he's like. And the other way that God reveals his character to us is that when we're faithful in the assignment, we get to meet him on the other side of that in whole new ways. And we start to understand his goodness and his faithfulness in ways that we never knew before. We didn't know what even was there. And that's one of the hardest things. This is the last service of the day. So you get all the bonus material. One of the hardest things about following the Lord is that when God brings you to this space where he gives you a really good gift and you're like, wow, I'm just so thankful to have this gift. And then he says, now here's this step of faith. And in order for you to take it, you're going to have to let go of this really good thing that I gave you. Uh, but God, it was a really, really good thing. He was like, yeah, I bet. Is the God of the really, really good thing -- can he also be the God of an even better thing on the other side? And I'm like, how do I know that you will do that? And he's like, whatever, just know that, you know, a thousand times I've been good to you. So it's not like I'm going to change it.

Now implication number two. When we obey God, we get to have fellowship with him and learn who he is and what he's like. When we obey God, we get to have fellowship with him. Like we're connected to him.

Implication number three, when God works through us, or around us , we will not only get to be a part of the blessing for others, but we also get blessed

Implication number four, we will not be able to do what God asks by our own power, but he will never lead us where his power won't sustain us. And I love that truth. He'll never lead us where his power won't sustain us. Now, he will absolutely let us try. When we try to do it with our own power, we would fold like a napkin, but he'll never lead us where power won't sustain us. And so over this whole series, we've been wrestling with this question that I keep bringing up periodically, like, where is there space in your life? Where you're just not being faithful? You know it, I don't know it, nobody else around you knows it, but where's the space where you feel like God's been together. And you're just like, nah, I cannot, I can't do it. Where's that space.

Because as we enter into our communion time, I would love for you to wrestle with like communion is this beautiful picture of God's saying to us at one level, there is nothing that I won't do. There is no place that I won't go to let you know how much I love you. Where's the place that I just won't do that frame. Once you take a minute and sit with God, Russell went through, as we prepare our hearts to take communion together on the night, Jesus was betrayed. He took bread and he broke it. And he said, this is my body, which has given for you. So whenever you eat this bread, remember this with me. And then in the same way, after the dinner, he took a cup and he said, this cup is the blood of the covenant, which is shed for you. So whenever you drink this cup, do it in remembrance. Let's pray. God, thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for your unrelenting pursuit of us. And thank you that as we take steps of faith, time after time, after time, you show yourself to be more than we could've ever imagined. Lord God give us the courage and the faith to trust you in the steps on the front end to be like Moses and Paul, who didn't understand, but follows you like Abraham. We're able to see you do great things to experience your change in their own hearts because of their willingness to trust you and your word, help us to be a people of your word. Not a people of our eyes, Jesus. Stand and sing. One more song.