

## Sermon Transcript 4-19-20

### Experiencing God

#### God Pursues a Love Relationship

Hi Southeast family and our friends and almost family who are joining us from all over. It's been fun to see as people have tuned in from different spaces, just that they're joining us in our worship time. We're so glad that you've chosen to be a part of our service time together. We pray you're blessed by what you experience.

This is the time in the service where we take an opportunity to continue worshiping God with our giving. What we're encouraging people to do is to jump on online. You can go onto our website and give at [Southeastcc.org/give](https://Southeastcc.org/give). You can give through Pushpay. There's a number of different ways to give online. If that's not something that you feel comfortable with, that's totally fine. You're welcome to send the check into our office. That address can also be found on our website, but something that I would encourage you to do right now, even in the comfort of your own home, download our app. What that is going to do for you is several things: Number one, it's going to keep you aware of all kinds of announcements and as we start to see the country slowly opening back up. One of the things that's going to happen, as far as our ability to meet and what those restrictions look like and how we can honor all the things that are going on, is that we're going to have to make changes to things like service times and seating capacities and all that. That change is going to potentially happen really quickly.

Downloading the app is going to give you the opportunity to stay aware of all that stuff, as it happens. The other thing that the app does for you is it gives you the ability to download a program, the sermon notes for what we're talking about during this time, and then you can go back in and watch other sermons. You can watch other full services, whatever you want to do that's all there and available for you on the app. It's a

super helpful tool for us, to be able to communicate with you and so I would encourage you to do that. One caveat. Make sure that you download Southeast Christian Church from Parker, Colorado and not an alleged other Southeast Christian Church that may or may not exist. I see there's a number of Southeast Christian churches and so just want to make sure that you get the correct one that you're looking for. Maybe you are looking for a different one, that would be fine too, but if you want ours, make sure it's the Southeast Christian Church in Parker, Colorado.

We had a great Easter weekend last weekend. It was fun, great time of worshiping the Lord together and celebrating the resurrection. We're going to jump back into our series now, week three of experiencing God. What we've been trying to do is lay a foundation for, if you want to hear God speak, if you want to see God at work in your life.

There's some groundwork that we need to lay in our own hearts and in our own actions and our ways that we view the world that will influence our ability to see God working, and that's really significant because it's not...It's irreverent of us to just assume that we can run into the presence of God without taking seriously what it means to stand in the presence of a Holy God. And there's this tension that I love about the Christian life and I love about the Bible, about the New Testament specifically, and that is, we call God, Daddy. We call him Abba Father like we don't have to be afraid of him. And the Hebrew says that we can approach the throne of grace with confidence because we have a great high priest who is able to understand and sympathize with our weaknesses. On the flip side of that, we must never forget that the God that we serve is profoundly Holy and that when people see him in his glory, just in small tastes of it, it undoes them like they're not just a, Hey God, Hey, Jesus is my homeboy.

I hate those t-shirts. Jesus. Jesus is not your home boy. He's a creator of the universe before he's anything else. Jesus is that powerful. So, for us to approach God, to see him at work in our life and in the world around us, we need to have a posture of our life, of our heart, of our mindset that prepares us to be able to see it. And there's a difference, like we approach the throne of grace with confidence, but may we never approach the throne of grace with arrogance. Those are very different spaces. So, we've been laying this foundation of if we want to see God work in our life, there is this kind of foundation that we need to lay in our life. God has to be, we didn't leave a God-centered life over self-centered life.

And so we talked a little bit about what that means and that Jesus needs to be the savior of our life, but he also needs to be the Lord of our life, the boss of our life. And that's part of what living as a Christian means. Today, what we're going to talk about is this really cool idea about the kind of relationship that God desires to have with us. God doesn't want to have a relationship with us that's distant. God wants to have a relationship with us like a father and a son. And I know that for some of us, when we hear that, that doesn't bring up good memories. That doesn't bring up good things. And so I would suggest not a father and a son the way some of us experienced a father and a son relationship, but a father and a son relationship as it's intended to be like in all of its best aspects where a father and a daughter relationship the way that it's intended to be, that there's this beauty and wonder and awesomeness in the relationship that we have with God. This is a, God desires this kind of love relationship. When you hear the stories about the really good dads or the moments where dads did things well. That's the kind of relationship that God is desiring to have with you and me. So, we're going to take a look at that. What does that look like? And then how do we respond to it? Okay?

That's going to be significant and we're going to begin in Matthew chapter 22. Here's what it says. It says, "one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law? And he said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment." Now, what's interesting here is this is not unfamiliar by the way. It's not unfamiliar to the lawyer. This is a prayer, the Shema that he prays four or five times a day. (speaking in Hebrew)

This is, this is the prayer that they pray so much that it's just... by the way, I wasn't speaking in tongues. It's Hebrew. That's the Hebrew prayer. For those of you that were like, Oh my goodness, Aaron just got the gift. No, that's not what that was. This is the Shema prayer that is prayed repetitively in, in the Jewish world. Then, he goes on to say like, "this is the most important thing." You already know what the most important commandment is to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, not like 98% of it, all of it with all of your strength. This is the most important thing that we can do. As human being, this is our fundamental created responsibility. I want to take a look at this. What does it mean to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength? What does that look like? So, we're going to look at five pieces out of this workbook Experiencing God that we've been taking a look at written by Henry Blackaby. It's a great workbook. If you're going through it, it's very helpful in this process. You certainly don't have to, but it's helpful in this process, if you would like.

But here's the first point we want to talk about. You were created for a love relationship with God. That is why God made you. In other words, God made you to love you. God didn't make you to control you. God didn't make you to dominate. God didn't make you to show you how

much stronger he is than you. God didn't make you to confuse you. God didn't make you to abandon you. God made you to love you. And his desire for us isn't that we accomplish great things for him. Although that may happen. God's desire for us is that we would have a kind of relationship with him where we can love him as a good father. That's his desire, and this is so important...John 3:16, famous verse by the way, second most popular verse in the whole Bible is John three 16 according to the research. Number one most popular verse in the whole Bible is "God helps those that helps themselves", oddly enough, not scripture. Do with that what you will, but that was written by Ben Franklin. This is actually the verse that we should be taking a look at. John 3:16" for God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." God gave Jesus not because he was up in heaven going, Oh my goodness, what do I do with these people? That what a mess. Ah, they're, they're doing it all wrong. That's not where God's at with you and me. God loved the world so much. He loved us. That's the root of all of God's motivation. And we've been talking about this over the last several weeks, like, what motivates God and the world isn't solving problems that you and I create that would make us the lead dancer. And God is constantly responding and reacting to us. God's love is driving the story that he's telling in the world, and our invitation is to be a part of that. "God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but should have eternal life." That's beautiful. Now here's another one written by the same guy and another book called first John. So there's John and then there's first John, and then by the way, there's second John and then there's third John, and then there's Revelation. He ran out, he didn't want fourth John, but all the same guy wrote them all. But in 1 John 3:16 it says this, "by this we know love, he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." Think about this for just a second. God gave his son who laid his life down for us and our response ,then, what it looks like to have a love relationship with God is that you and I

would in turn lay our lives down for the people around us that we would make everyone around us better because we're in the room. You know, like we've, we've met these people along the way in our life.

These people make the room better when they leave it than when they came. That's just who they are. They speak life. They give life and in various forms, whether that's encouragement or empowerment or they serve people in some way. Whatever it is, these people that are laying their life down on the behalf of the people around them, that's how we tell God that we love him. It's how we know what love is. God loves us, so he laid his life down. Therefore, you and I lay our lives down for other people. In the same book. John continues with this in John 4, he says this, "in this, the love of God was made manifest among us that God sent his only son into the world so that we might live through him in this love. Not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins." Propitiation...now that's a crazy word and will in fact be another sermon for another day.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." Same call. This is how we know what love is that God, God laid Jesus, laid his life down for us. Not that we loved him first, but he loved us first like he initiated this whole gig and we see that. We see that as a visual picture of what love looks like. And if he loved us that way, we ought to love one another the same way. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us because he has given us of his spirit." Let's keep reading, "and we've seen and testified that the father has sent his son to be the savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the son of God, God abides in him and he and God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love." If you're taking notes this is something you should

probably underline. Love doesn't control people with fear, but perfect love casts out fear... reminds me of what Paul says in Romans. It's the kindness of God that leads us to repentance.

“Perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. The evidence that we are in a love relationship with God, which is what we were created for. The evidence that we're in that relationship with him isn't the mental truth that we assent to, the evidence that we're in a love relationship with God is that we are loving other people well. That's what it looks like to live the Christian life. No matter what we say, we believe it's our love of one another that proves who our God really is. And this is why we were created, which means then that you and I have to have a really good picture of what it means to love someone. Because some people will take the phrase God is love and they'll flip it and say love is God. And they'll say, God is love, but what they mean is love is God. And that's how we translate that is, we just, it's kind of blind tolerance of whatever. Like that's not loving. It's not loving to watch somebody hurt themselves and not say anything about it. For example, if you have somebody who's struggling with an addiction, it's not loving to not say anything. It's not loving to give them money to help them continue it. That's not love, that's enabling. You're enabling destruction. And if you love that person, you don't want them to be destroyed. You want them to be whole. God is love and we show that we are in a love relationship with God by the way, that we love one another, which means that we need to know what it means to love one another well. That's an important conversation.

Number two point that we want to make a love relationship with God is the highest position in life. You can't do anything more important in your life than to be in a love relationship with God. You can't make more money than that. You can't get a high enough status. You can't do that. And we get caught in a culture that believes that loving God's like,

okay, like yeah, it's important, but you need to make sure that you aspire and grow and you achieve and do all this stuff. Like listen, there's nothing more important that you can do than love God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your strength. There's nothing more important than you can do than that. I love this quote from Francis Chan's book. Um, what's it called? It's on the slide. Throw it up there. Crazy Love, for crying out loud. Here's the quote. "Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter." Like what Blackaby talks about in the workbook Experiencing God is imagine that you've, there's a wall and you've leaned the ladder of your life up against that wall and you climb the ladder and climb the ladder and climb the ladder only to find out that you've leaned it up against the wrong wall. There's something worse than failure and that's succeeding at things that don't matter. And the problem is we're invited and to succeed in all kinds of things. Just to keep picking on culture: I watch parents who raise their kids in a church and they don't understand why their kids love sports, but they don't love coming to church and worshipping God. Well, think about it like when, when they go to, when they're in a basketball game and they drop 20 points in a game and you as a parent are jumping up and down and cheering for them and "you succeeded". But then when they come to church and in the worship service, you stand there quietly, stoically maybe mouthing the words maybe even singing, but it's not like the intensity with which we worship God is exponentially smaller than the intensity with which we love when our kids succeed. Like why would they love sports and not love church? Man, it's so confusing to me. I don't, I don't know. And I, and I'm not saying like that your kid shouldn't play sports. What I'm saying is your kids need to see sports for what they are and they need to see worshipping God for what it is because we're called to be in a love relationship with God. There is nothing more important that we can do than worshipping him. There's no 50 point basketball games that are going to help your kid get into heaven.



But we celebrate all the wrong things. And because of that, we celebrate job promotions and we celebrate money and we celebrate, and there's nothing wrong with those things. They're wonderful. But don't you dare celebrate those with more veracity than you worship the Lord. The most important thing that we can do is to worship him with passion. Look at Philippians 3. I love this passage it's my life passage. Paul is in a process of describing all of his accomplishments, which, by the way are many and he says, "though, I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh. Also, if anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more. Circumcised on the eighth day the people of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin." And you're like, what circumcision in eight days, big deal. Well, for him it is a big deal for his people. It is a big deal. "A Hebrew of Hebrews as to the law, a Pharisee as to zeal, a persecutor of the church and as to righteousness under the law. Blameless."

Now before we go any further, I would just like to invite us to consider the statement that he just made. Because so many of us are like, well, we just can't. I just can't. I just can't follow the rules. You know, it's just, I just can't. I just, I'm always in a mess up. I'm just going to mess up all the time. Here's what Paul says, "as far as the rules that were set for me, as far as righteousness, according to the law, blameless. " I did it all. I followed all the rules. That's no small task. Let's keep reading, "but whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For his sake. I have suffered the loss of all things." By the way, that phrase "all things" ... Guess what it translates as, "all things". Paul, all these things, by the way, had some wealth and this is a conversation we have in Turkey, but he was wealthy, he was wealthy, he lost it all. I wonder how many of us, if we had to give all that up, would just whine and complain and be bitter at God, and what Paul says is, is it's not even worth comparing with knowing Jesus. For his

sake, I suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish” If you ever want to do a fun word, steady pull apart, that Greek word translated rubbish, that's never going to work its way into a sermon. So that's not a sermon for another day, but it's a big deal.” In order that I may gain Christ and be found in him not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him”, listen to this “and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings becoming like him in his death. That by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I've already attained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind”, man, if we could just understand those four words, “forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” There's nothing in Paul's world, there is nothing in his mind that can take the place. So if I have to suffer for him, great. If I can be blessed and work and be in a good spot for him, great. It doesn't matter because none of that, none of my physical circumstances matter anything compared to the surpassing greatness of just knowing Jesus.

And if for some of us listening today, we're going, I don't really believe that. I don't know if I really, I don't know if I really believe that. Like I know I'm probably supposed to, but I don't know if I really do. That's okay. But I would suggest that maybe it's time for you to take a deeper look into who Jesus really is and how much he loves you and me. The early church counted it a privilege to suffer in order to put on display the name of God. Well, and maybe we can learn a lesson or two.

Third point that we need to make here is that walking with God means we have fellowship with him. What that means is walking with God

doesn't mean that we have like a, I said yes to Jesus and then I kind of put that whole moment in my rearview mirror and went on generally trying to live morally. Paul, in Ephesians 5, paints a picture of what this relationship between Jesus and us is supposed to look like. Now, I'm not gonna pull apart all the different facets of this passage. I just want us to look at the relationship. Okay, so Ephesians 5 t says this, "wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body and is himself, its savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives must submit in everything to their husbands and husband's love".

Stopping there, but the passage goes on. "Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. " Quick question, husbands, before you ever ask your wife to submit, which is by the way, the worst thing that you can do, like you should submit. You'll wake up with your hand on your head and, and knot underneath of it. What I can tell you is, before you ever say anything about that, the question that you ought to be asking, husband, is this, when was the last time that you gave yourself up for her? When was the last time that you became less, so that she could become more. Not you became less so that she would like you better. You became less solely for the reason that she could become more. When was the last time that happened? "Husbands love your wives the way Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Let's keep reading, "that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word so that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. That she might be Holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife, loves himself. For no one has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as Christ does the church because we are members of his body. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother hold fast to his wife and the two become one flesh." This mystery is profound and I'm saying that it refers to Christ in the church. Walking with God means that we're in fellowship with him.

What that means, like the relationship that the Bible describes between Jesus and the church, Jesus and you and me, is not one of function. It's not one of rules. It's one of a husband and a wife intimately connected like there is no more intimate relationship in our life. This bond between a husband and a wife, this is the kind of, and, we try to short circuit that in our marriages all the time, but it doesn't work. Marriage that works is a marriage that is constantly connected. It's fellowshiping, it's working at being connected with one another. Marriages that don't work at being connected with one another, like, if you don't do it on purpose, it'll accidentally fall apart. And then we go, well, what happened? Well, start by taking care of things like doing the right things the right way. This is the relationship that God desires with his people, with you and me. Not corporately, yes, but not only corporately, individually. God desires to have that kind of a relationship with us. And that's significant, because walking with God doesn't just mean that I acknowledged that he's God. And then I got put under the water and I came out and I'm good and I kind of just try to live generally morally. Walking with God means that we're connected the way a husband and a wife are connected. Intimacy and all of its facets, emotional and spiritual connectedness that we only find in that one relationship. That's God's desire with his church.

Number 4: God initiates and pursues a relationship with us. So the good news is God wants this kind of relationship with us and he doesn't wait for us to figure it out. He initiates relationship with us. He pursues relationship with us. Let's take a look at Romans 5, it says, "therefore, since we've been justified through by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him, we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings knowing," but okay, cut to me for a second. We rejoice in our sufferings like hear that... how do you even do that? Well, here's how. Let's keep

reading. "Knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame. Because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person, one who would dare even to die, but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since therefore we've now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God, for if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son much more now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved, by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." Here's the kicker. What he's saying here is, those of us that had been justified, those of us that are back in right standing with God, we aren't there because we figured out something special. We're there because when we were a mess, Jesus made it possible for us to get there. He's not waiting for us to figure it out. He did all the work. Our job is to simply respond to it and then begin to grow up in it. That's our call. God initiates a relationship with us. He doesn't wait for us to have it figured out. We don't have to get ourselves cleaned up before we come to church. And for those of us that are watching this morning that have kind of re-engaged God over the last few weeks because of all this craziness that's going on in the world, listen to me. God wants you. God is longing for you to come home. He's made it possible for it to happen. And when you get here, I don't know if we're gonna be able to hug you or not, but we'll, we'll in our hearts, we may have to elbow bump you -- I don't know. I don't know exactly what that's gonna look like, but we're so glad that you're going to come home at all. Like God's not waiting for you to figure it out. He's a bigger God than that.

Fifth point – gonna move through this quickly. God's relationship with us is real, practical and personal. This is important for us to get because I think we look at our relationship with God, like, it just doesn't make any sense. And what even is it? Listen, God's not trying to have a relationship with you that's crazy or weird or odd. God wants a relationship with you that's real. It's relevant to the world that we're living in right here, right now. It's practical. It actually has, it helps us in functioning in the world today, right where we are and it's personal. God's not giving blanket edicts for all. I mean, there are some of those, but God's also working with us individually. It's a personal relationship with God, which is so comforting because there are things about me that are unique to me. Some people would say there's a lot unique about me, but the, there are things about me that are true of me and where I'm at and what I'm going through that aren't true of where anybody else is at and vice versa. There are things about each one of us that are unique to us based on context, based on personality, based on experiences, based on our path, whatever it is. Like there are things about us that are relevant only to me and God is working with us in a very personal way, each one of us, and that's really, really, really cool. Let's look at Luke 10, here's what it says, “after this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them out ahead of him, two by two in every town and place where he himself was about to go and he said to them, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” By the way, this is actually really significant because, if you read the Bible, if you read the gospels, Jesus never asks us to pray for lost people. Now I think we should pray for lost people, people who don't have relationship with Jesus, but Jesus never asks us to pray for them. It's almost like God is constantly working on people all around us all the time. What Jesus asks us to pray for is workers who are willing to go into the harvest and make a difference. There's lots of people around us all the time that are, that are ready to have a conversation about

God. The problem is there's not enough people who are actually walking with the Lord that are ready to have it, that are aware of God's working in the people around them -- enough to be able to do that. And that's why Jesus says, listen, the harvest is plentiful. There's lots of people ready to come to the Lord, but the workers are few. So pray for workers, let's keep reading. "Go your way and behold, I'm sending you out as lamb in the midst of wolves." That's comforting. "Carry no money bag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whenever you enter a house for say, peace be to this house, and if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return on you." By the way, the word that's translated piece there is the word karas. It can also be translated blessing. Now, if you remember the blessing sermon that I did with my dad, we talked about the blessing. Blessing is an active agent. Like when you speak a blessing in someone's life, you're releasing God into their life. And what Jesus says is you speak a blessing into someone's life. If they, if a person of blessing is there, it will fall on them. If not it returns on you. Well, if you have a potential of getting the blessing that you're speaking, what kind of cool blessings are you going to speak? May you be buried in thousand dollar bills. If a son of peace is there, peace will rest on him. But if not, it will return to you and remain in the same house eating and drinking what they provide, for a laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house." Now, let me explain to you why that verse is there. Here's why, because in the ancient near East custom, if you ask to be somebody's guest, they are required to take care of you for up to 10 days. But the way that that worked is, you know, even family is stale and old after 10 days... what happens is, they will take good care of you for the first couple, three days, maybe four days, but then they have to feed you but they're going to feed you really poorly. – maybe a stale biscuit and a cup of water and they'll do it's minimum compliance hosting. Then the encouragement is that if you, as the guest leave, you can do that. But they can't, as the host, ask you to leave even though they want you to. So what Jesus says to them is, listen, when you go

into a house, don't bounce around because what they do is they go, I'm going to stay two days here, two days here in two days here so that I eat really good and I'm taken care of well and I'm well pampered. What he's saying is no, you stay right where you're at and you let the Lord provide for you through those people.

Yeah, let's keep reading. "Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you, heal the sick and say to them, the kingdom of God has come near to you." The idea of this passage and the reason why it matters to this discussion is that the goal of all this process here isn't just simply that these people have this weird like, yeah, I said yes to Jesus and now I'm wandering around in this ethereal world of trying to figure out what it means to follow him. God's like, no, here's your mission. Go, go give people a message. Remember when we talk about Matthew 4:19, here's a disciple. A disciple is somebody who's committed to following Christ, is committed to being changed by Christ and who's committed to the mission of Christ, and what Jesus says is, here's your mission. If you've received my love, you should love other people well, and the way you do that is you help them understand the kingdom of God is near. There's this power at work in and around us that we can be a part of. Let's look at another passage Philippians 4, it says, "let your gentleness be evident to all the Lord is near. When the Lord is near, our gentleness should be on display. How practical is that? It's not about brow beating people with the truth. It's not about convincing them that we're right. It's about being gentle because the Lord is present. Next passage, Ephesians 2, "but now, in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." The desire for God in all of this is that we come near to him and as people interact with us, they come near to him as well because they come near to us, which is really profound. The relationship that God wants with you and me isn't a relationship of dominance or aggression or control. God wants a



relationship with us that is real and personal and practical and relevant and is rooted in the way that a good dad would grab his kids and help them become everything that they're intended to be by calling out their creative potential.

So, some implications for this sermon. Implication number one: God created us to have a specific kind of relationship with him. Now let me say this real quick. If you want a different kind of relationship with God, that doesn't matter. God created us for a specific kind of relationship with him. So if we want to have a relationship with God, he gets to set the terms. The good news is he's a good father who wants good things for us. So his terms are good, like it's not. It's not like his terms are just right. His terms aren't just like, well, I'm more powerful than you, so you have to follow me. His terms are better than anything we can come up with on our own. So, God created us for a specific kind of relationship. But that relationship is good.

Implication number two: the greatest accomplishment of our lives is to live in the truth of our relationship with God. There is nothing more important that you can do than to be fully enveloped in a relationship with the Lord. There's nothing more important that you can do and that doesn't mean that you have to withdraw to the mountains and be a hermit. That's actually very active in the world as we move in and amongst people at a six foot socially appropriate distance. However that goes, it's engaging people not isolating from them.

Implication number three: God has already initiated a relationship with us. We only need to respond. I love that God isn't waiting for us to figure it out cause the truth is I'm kind of a knucklehead and I wouldn't figure it out very quickly. God's not waiting for us to have it together. He's not waiting for us to achieve a certain level of rightness. God's

already done the work. He's already said, Hey, come home. I know, I know you got lots of questions. I know you have a lot of things going on. I know you have--things didn't turn out the way. I know all those things. I know it all. Just come home, just come home, we'll grow together. I got this. Just come home.

Implication number four, our relationship with God is real, practical, and personal. And I just want to camp on this as we tie this down. This idea that God's relationship with us isn't difficult. It's not complicated. Jesus says, come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for a meek and lowly at heart and you'll find rest for your souls. He says, my yoke is easy and my burden is light. This real, relevant relationship with God is what he's inviting us into. Not some weird oddball thing that doesn't make any sense in the world that we're in.

And so as we move into our communion time together, whether you got Cheez-Its and Gatorade, or you stopped by the office and picked up real communion, God knows where you're at in your heart. And I would just say that as we move into this communion time, that we would consider the importance of what communion represents -- this moment of Jesus's death, burial and resurrection. This reminder of his lane, his life down for us before we even knew we needed it. Jesus made a way before we even knew we needed a way, because he knew what it would mean to us. This moment where we consider how much God loves us, that he gave his one and only son so that whoever believes in him shouldn't perish, but can have eternal life. Let's consider that moment as we move forward with communion time. On the night Jesus was betrayed, he took 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, in the same way, after the dinner, he took a cup and he said, this cup, this is 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, first of all, thanks that you even want a relationship with us. God thanks that you, not only do you want it, but it's the purpose for which we walk this earth. The reason why we were born, the reason why you created this world, the reason why you continue to give us grace and to endure as we as humans, try to figure out what it means to be human. Lord, that you would continue to just love us and love us and love us, thank you for that. And, God, thank you that you've cleared all the hurdles. You've filled every pothole you've knocked down every wall. God thank you that you've made a way for us to have relationship with you. In Jesus' name. Amen. Let's sing one more song together.

God's been so incredibly faithful to us -- so good, so loving, so profound. And his invitation to us is, come be a part of that life regardless of the circumstances that are going on around you, regardless of what's happening in this neck of the woods, in this moment in time. God's goodness and his desires for us are secure. So, may you and I live in this time, in this amazing point in history, live in a way that is reflective of God's goodness to you and me. Thanks for watching. I hope you have a great week.