

January 27, 2018

They Who Have Seen Jesus Have Seen God

John 14:6-17

Many of the thoughts and paraphrases in this message are based on or from the book God as He Longs For Us To See Him, by Chip Ingram, (Baker Books, 2004).

Recently I found myself saying “God is good all the time. All the time God is good.” And it bothered me. It is a true statement. But I found myself thinking about what I was actually saying: was I almost being flippant?

Do people ask you who God is? What do you tell them? Moses asked who God is. God says ‘I AM WHO I AM: This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations. Say to the Israelites, “I AM has sent me.”’ (Exodus 34:1-15).

If someone asked you who you were talking about, who Jesus is, who God is, would you say I Am sent me to tell you about him?

When Jesus asked the disciples ‘who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Do we say this? Yes, of course!

Jesus says we are blessed “For flesh and blood has not revealed this to us, but my Father in heaven.” If you say Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, God incarnate, you are able to say that because you have received and believed the Good News of God’s son Jesus. God, the Holy Spirit, has spoken to you personally. And you listened and responded ‘

Jesus words are powerful “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me?’

Jesus tells us ‘Whoever has seen me has seen the Father’. Do we understand the words? Do we believe them? What will we do?

Jesus tells us he and the Father are one. He tells us if we see him we have seen God. Paul wrote the fullness of God is in Jesus. (Colossians 2:9) When the

scriptures were read this morning we were hearing the Word of God: God's self-revelation. We are the people of God.

God is so big and so wonderful. God is our Father, our Savior and our Guide all at the same time, all the time, everywhere and he loves us.

God is everywhere you go. He is there before you arrive. Nothing surprises God: neither our good decisions or our bad decisions or the consequences of each.

God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. God is everywhere all the time, has all knowledge past, present and future. God has all power.

God is I Am. God says this is his name forever and God's title for all generations. (Exodus 34:1-15). God tells Moses to say to the Israelites I AM sent me. Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh: God incarnate. Jesus Christ is Emanuel: God with us. Jesus is I Am. Who do you say sent you? What do you tell your family and friends? Do you say I AM sent me?

Many of us enjoy buffets with many items. We can pick and choose between them. Do you sometimes get the feeling God is being presented as if he is a buffet? As if we can pick and choose those parts of God we want. God is not a buffet God is "I Am".

God weeps for people but does not impose his will on us. I Am is good, I Am is sovereign, I Am is holy, I Am is wise, I Am is just, I Am is love, I Am is faithful. We need to know God because we will follow who we know. We will tell others about who we know.

God is good. God's goodness includes moral excellence, worthiness, kindness, and being committed to the well-being of others. This is what we see when we see God's blessings and good gifts on all people both believers and those who reject him. God's goodness is demonstrated in our deliverance from the wrath and judgment sin calls for. Goodness is God's promises. God delights in doing good and his goodness is fair and generous. God's goodness is God's grace: unmerited favor.

God is not good because he does good things nor is God good because we do good things. God is good because that is who God is.

God is good all the time. All the time God is good.

People cannot know God without the Holy Spirit. God is the perfect gift giver. Out of his goodness comes a way and the truth and life itself. Only a good God gives righteousness, salvation, truth, good news, faith and his Word.

People say a good God would not send anyone to hell. Our good God doesn't send anyone to hell but rather sent his son so no one has to go to hell.

Is God good? He has known us from before we existed. He loved us knowing full well how we behave. He still draws us to himself. (John 6:44)

God is sovereign. God had Isaiah write "I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no god. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one." (Isaiah 44:6-8)

Our reason to worship God as sovereign is because he is before all things, he created all things, he upholds all things, he is above all things, he knows all things, he accomplishes all things, he rules over all things, and he controls all things. What this means is nothing happens in your life God does not either decree or allow.

God is holy. The author of Hebrews wrote "without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). God's holiness is the total absence of evil, of sin. We cannot even begin to imagine God's holiness. It is permanent: it is fixed, and it is unchangeable. It is beyond our human understanding of purity and righteousness. We are so far from this holiness we think we can pick and choose what parts of his Word apply to us but God's holiness is not a buffet. We must grasp God's holiness because it is God's absolute holiness that makes God's grace and mercy so awesome.

The only unholy thing ever about God was when our sin was on Jesus at his death. Christ's death satisfied the requirements of God's holiness.

God does not compromise his holiness. Light and darkness cannot fellowship with each other.

God's holiness is expressed in the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. We are unfaithful when we violate God's holiness. There are consequences. There is judgment BUT these come with justice, grace, and mercy.

God deals with us and says be holy as he is holy. How do we do this? We do this by faith in his mercy and grace and love and perfect justice.

God is wise. “O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” (Romans 11:33)

Do you believe that everything in your life may be part of a wise plan? You may have your own plan and ignore God’s plan but do you think there may be a wise plan for you? This is important because if you do not believe God is all wise you will not trust him.

How can we know God’s wisdom, his plan, for us? We start by realizing God’s will for us in any situation will never contradict the Bible.

Jesus’ brother James wrote “the wisdom (of God) from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.” (James 3:17)

God is just. All humans, wherever or whenever we live, have a sense some things are right and some things are wrong: there is a right way to live. And then we ignore it and live as we want to. We all long for justice. Or, maybe we all long for retribution (punishment) for others but do not want to apply justice to ourselves. The justice of God is absolute: everyone will get what they deserve according to their works. God’s wrath is about sin; about what we do or fail to do. There is a cost: a consequence and God is the perfect judge.

Can you be merciful and judgmental at the same time? God is perfect justice and perfect mercy at the same time. (Micah6:8)

C.S. Lewis summed it up: “God treats all people justly and God will honor our rejection of him for all eternity. God does not send anyone to hell.”

God is just and merciful. Our God does not weigh what you have done against what you should have done but acts on your behalf knowing full well your sinfulness. Not a work or failure to act or a word spoken or withheld will change the fact that God is just and merciful.

God is love. He can tell us to love our enemies because he loved us when we were his enemies. Love is his disposition towards us and is expressed as unconditional affection. His love of you is not based on what you think or say or do. God's love for you has no requirements that you should respect it, or accept it, or honor it, or try to copy it, or even to say thank you for loving you. It just is because God is love.

He shows his love for us by his goodness, mercy, longsuffering and grace. "See what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are." (1 John 1:3)

When we cry Abba! Father it is because God the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:14-17). Only a God who loves us as children will allow us to call him Abba (a familiar term like daddy).

Sometimes we wonder if God loves us. But we usually have a good idea about who God shouldn't love.

God's love is undeserved. We are so unlovable but God sees us as lovable. Do we understand the love of God and accept that he loves us even when we feel most unlovable? If we do then we have a message of hope, a message of mercy and love.

God's love is unconditional and directed to all people not just obedient and good people. When we share his love with others it is an act of our will and by faith.

God loves us not because we love him but because of who God is. People say a loving God would not send anyone to hell. Our loving God doesn't send anyone to hell but rather sent his son so no one has to go to hell.

From the forever past God proposed to redeem us for himself and to redeem others.

God is faithful. "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is God's faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-23).

We experience swings in the effectiveness of institutions, the church, the stock market, even our own affections. But God is faithful. There is no change. If there were changes in God, God would not be God with a capital 'G'. If there are changes in your god then your god has a small 'g'.

God is faithful to what he has said. God cannot be otherwise because God faithfully leads us in right paths for his name's sake (Psalms 23:3).

God finds us – we do not find him. You can't believe in someone or something you have not heard about. (Romans 10:14-18)

Only God, who created heaven and earth, can create a Christian. Do not forget whose you are.

The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself. (2 Timothy 2:11-13)

God has staked his reputation on taking care of us.

God's faithfulness means if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It has nothing to do with whether or not you feel forgiven. (1 John 1:9).

We must be careful about our faith. Chip Ingram the author warns: "When people believe in God but reject Jesus they are redefining God and worshipping a creation of their own imagination."

One more quote from Ingram's book (page 115) "those who are still lost in the world ought to be able walk into any gathering of believers and sense the presence, the power, and the holiness of God, because God dwells among his people. "

Only a Good God, a Sovereign God, a Holy God, a Just God, a Loving God, a Faithful God can say to you and me "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55: 10-11)

If you have seen Jesus you have seen the Father. Who will you say sent you? Will you say I AM sent me?