

Jehovah. . .Up Close And Personal
Indescribable, part 1 **Sunday, September 4, 2005**

This morning, as you can see, we are starting out on a new series of messages called INDESCRIBABLE, a series of talks about God's names.

Early in my Christian life, I was in the midst of one of the most severe times of trial and difficulty that I had ever gone through. I had come through the euphoria of the first few years of being a Christian, those years of initial excitement that we experience after coming to know Jesus in reality for the first time. And I was now facing things that were rocking my faith and trust. Then I came across Psalm 124, especially verse 8. It said:

Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. NIV

This, then, led me to Psalms 116:3-6. Here the Psalmist said:

The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the LORD: "O LORD, save me!"

The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The LORD protects the simple hearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. NIV

I was getting to see that there is a name to call on when I was in trouble or in need.

Now, I knew that the word "God" was not a name, but a title. You know, there are many kids here at this church who think that my first name is Pastor. All they hear is "Pastor John." They do not realize that "Pastor" is my title, not my name. In the same way "God" is not His name but His title.

The word "God" means the everlasting one, the self-existent one. Also, the word God, or as it is in the Hebrew language "Ei" or "Elohim," was a word used for God or false gods . . . It's not His name: It's His title.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

I personally would rather know someone's name than their title. Isn't there something good, after having called someone Mr. or Mrs. or Miss, that you hear them say, "Please call me. . ." and they give you their first name?

As I delved deeper into this name thing as a young Christian, I found out that GOD had a name that only privileged people could use. I found out that in the ancient world knowing another's name was a special privilege that offered access to that person's thoughts and life. I found out that God favored His people, Israel, by revealing Himself by a special name which offered special insight into His love and righteousness. I also found out that in the Old Testament names were given, not because they sounded nice, but because it described something about the person. It brought out personality.

We give names as a means of identification. Actually, numbers would do - son number one, son number two, daughter number one, and so on. Actually, in many government agencies that is all we are, anyway. Our names are given to differentiate between us. Our names are chosen for all sorts of reasons. Parents see a name in a book or on a TV program or, as you know, you can go on websites or buy books that list names now. But names can come from all sorts of places. Some children have names that we wonder what ever the parents were thinking of in giving them that name.

My name should have been Peter. It was going to be that right up until my mother was about seven months pregnant with me. Then one day she was out walking and she heard one of our neighbors calling their dog, "Come here, Peter." So, I became John from that moment. Whatever name they would have given me, though, I would still be this tall, dark and handsome figure of a man you have before you today. The name makes no difference, really, it just distinguishes me from other people.

But in Bible uses and in primitive societies, names were given because of circumstances that prevailed before or during the birth of the baby. You also find that the Bible shows us how names were changed to fit circumstances. For instance, God changed the name of Abram, meaning father, to Abraham, father of a multitude, . . . "for he will be the father of many nations." His wife's name also got changed.

It happened in the new testament, as well. Simon became Peter, and Saul became Paul. The reason was that names were not just names in Bible days. They carried meaning. They represented who that person was. And so it is with God's names.

You don't give God a name to distinguish Him from any other gods . . .THERE AREN'T ANY OTHERS. He is the only one. His names stand for who He is. His names represent who He is. Psalms 9:10 says:

Those who know your name will trust in you. NIV.

When they know all that your name represents, they will trust in you. Wow! What an honor that this God wants us to know His name.

Well, it's more than that, friends. This God wants to be up close and personal with you and me. It's more than that, friends. This God wants you to love Him. He wants you to know Him so much that you love Him with everything within you. He wants you to know Him and to love Him so much that you would lay down your life for Him. He wants you to know Him so much that you will receive His blessings. He wants you to know Him so much you will even take His correction in your life as an act of His love for you. He wants you to know Him so much that all you live for is to love and know Him more and more.

I can hear you, "OK, John, you have made your point."

SO, WHAT'S GOD'S NAME?

Turn in your Bibles to Exodus 3:13-15:

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites 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 them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers — the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob — has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. NIV

What is God's name? "I Am" or, as it is in the Hebrew language, "Yahweh" or "Jehovah."

Listen to this scripture: Exodus 6:2-3:

God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. NIV

Listen to how that same verse is put in the King James Version of the bible. Exodus 6:2-3:

And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. KJV

As you go through your NIV Bible, you need to note that wherever you see the word LORD in capital letters it means that in the original translations of the scriptures that would have been Yahweh or Jehovah. So, wherever you read the word LORD in capitals in the Old Testament, it is the family name of God to the Jews. And get this - In the Old Testament the name JEHOVAH appears 6,823 times.

So, what was God saying here to Moses? He was saying, "I was close to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob . . . but I want to get closer to you and to the Jewish people. I want you to call me by my personal name, the name reserved only for those who I want to be up close and personal with . . . Jehovah."

Well, that created a problem for me for awhile because I wondered, "If this is the name reserved for the Jews, then how am I able to use it? If this is the all powerful name that I can call on in my times of need but it's reserved only for the Jews, then I am in trouble. Then I came across this scripture in Ephesians 2:11-13:

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men) remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. NIV

Then verse 19 says these wonderful words:

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, NIV

I found out that through coming to Christ I miraculously became a member of God's family, God's people. I am on the "in." I am a child of God. I have the rights and privileges of being a child of God. I have the right to approach God at any time and to do so I use the family name, the "I am," Jehovah.

Look what Paul said in Ephesians 3:11-12:

. . . according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. NIV

Look what He said in Hebrews 4:16:

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. NIV

See, we all long for relationship. The single most inner longing we all have is for a sincere and real relationship with God. But here is the sheer joy of all this, friends: God does too!!! He longs for a deep inner relationship with you and me. In fact, He is offended when we don't want to know Him more, and when we choose to live any part of our lives without Him. He does not want to be a hidden God, a title God. He wants first name relationship with us. He says, "I want you to know my name, JEHOVAH. . .THE "GREAT I AM."

You may say, "I am?" What kind of name is that? It's a great name, friends. It means He can be whatever He decides we need Him to be. Throughout the scriptures He is:

INDESCRIBABLE BY ONE NAME

One name would never bring out who He really is to us. He is saying, "I am all that you will ever need." There are fourteen Jehovah names of God. We will look at just eight in this series.

He says:

"I am JEHOVAH JIREH" . . .the God who provides.

"I am JEHOVAH ROPHE" . . . the Lord who heals you.

"I am JEHOVAH NISSI" . . . the Lord my banner.

"I am JEHOVAH SABAIOTH" . . . the Lord of hosts.

"I am JEHOVAH SHALOM" . . . the Lord our peace.

"I am JEHOVAH TSIDKENU" . . . the Lord our righteousness.

"I am JEHOVAH SHAMMAH" . . . the Lord who is there.

"I am JEHOVAH ROHI" . . . the Lord my shepherd.

One name can never describe Him. One revelation of God is never enough. It always stirs desires to know Him more. And knowing Jehovah God is an ongoing revelation.

There is a very intimate story in Exodus where Moses and God are in conversation and Moses says to God, "Show Me Your Glory." And God says an unusual thing, Exodus 33:19-20:

"I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD (JEHOVAH), in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." NIV

God was going to get as close to Moses as He could without killing Him. Note why God decided to do this. You will find that in Exodus 33:17:

And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name." NIV

I KNOW YOUR NAME. Oh, you have to get this friends.

With a church this size, I have very embarrassing moments. See, it's impossible for me to know you all personally. Even to know you all by name is an impossible proposition. I meet some of you out and about the city and I get embarrassed when you know me but I don't know you. I try

to make you feel as if I remember you, but I have to be honest: I may remember your face, but I don't really know you.

But, when you talk of Letty, or Andrew and Terri, Rachel and Michael, Sheralee and Alex, or Ethan, Clay, Joy, Vivi, or Ella - my grandkids . . .well, now you're talking of people who I not only know, but the mere mention of their names gets my immediate attention. See, I not only know their names - I know them.

God says to Moses, "That's how I want to be known by all my people. I want to be able to say, 'I know them just by the mere mention of their names.'"

Oh, friends, I cannot know you intimately. I cannot know you in a close loving way. But, God can. God has this ability to know us as if we were the only ones alive, as the only ones that mattered. God wants to be able to say about you, "I know your name."

From this moment, Moses got an ever increasing revelation of God, only because he desired it, no, longed for it.

I have had seasons of my life where I desired God more than my next breath. Then there have been seasons where I just lapse into a pretend mode of Christianity, saying the right things, doing the right things, but its all pretend. I know it and God knows it. But, friends, I have found whenever I have come back to the place of saying, "Oh, God, forgive me. Please show me your glory," Jehovah is always there with fresh revelation, always ready to reveal new insights of who He is.

So, let me ask you: Does God know your name? He wants to. He longs to.

This morning, as I close, let me encourage you – don't be satisfied with what you know of God. Understand that He wants, no, longs for an intimate relationship with you. He longs to be up close and personal.

I know that, as I speak, some of you cannot wait until service is over to get out to eat . . . or to get to the golf course . . . or to get in front of the TV . . . or to prepare for an afternoon nap. Some here will go back to do some work. Tomorrow morning, for some of you, this message will just be a forgotten memory.

But, oh, I want you to see that in the midst of all that stuff and busy-ness you're missing out on the most important thing in life: God wants to know you. He wants to know you intimately. He wants to have a 24/7, minute by minute relationship with you. He wants to reveal more and more of Himself to you.

I want to suggest a few things for you to do this week that will help you get to know Jehovah better:

- Will you take the time for God to reveal Himself to you? Will you make at least fifteen minutes a day available to God so He can talk to you?
- Will you quietly start to read through the Psalms, as you wait before the Lord? Maybe a whole Psalm or part of a longer one?
- Will you consider buying the Hillsong *God He Reigns* CD which we have on sale here for you today? Will you pick out the worship songs and play them each day as you wait before God? We will be singing many of the songs on that CD during this series.
- Will you finish the fifteen minutes with at least five minutes waiting before God to allow him to speak to you? He will speak to you if you listen. Just tell Him, "I want you to know my name, and I want to know you, Jehovah God."
- Will you watch the *Passion of the Christ* video sometime this week and be saying to yourself right though it . . ."It was all for me."

Next week I will be talking about "JEHOVAH JIREH". . . the God who provides.

Now, let's pray.