



"Hide and Seek"

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As children many of us loved playing the game hide and seek, some of us still love to play that game. But what happens when that game begins to represent your relationship with God? You are seeking, but He seems to be hiding, what then? As Christians we believe we need a relationship with God, but how do we do that with someone/something we cant see, hear, feel or experience? How do we do this when it doesn't fit the pattern of all of our other relationships? In this series we will talk about seeking after God. We will discuss how we can learn to find God in the mundane of each day, how we find God when our world is falling apart, we will look at the most affective ways to communicate with God, and talk about discovering God's presence and spirit in everyone around us.

Week 1 - "The God of Whispers"

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Many of us have gone to camp, been on a mission trip or a retreat, been apart of an amazing worship service and there at some point we felt the unique and powerful presence of God. We feel touched, filled, inspired, uplifted, made whole, we get the Jesus high. But when we get home that Jesus high we felt never seems to last. Why? Why can't we have those feelings every day? Could it be that God wants us to experience Him a different way? Could there be more to a relationship with God than the once a year mission high? Is there a way to experience God each and everyday? This week we will look at the story of Elijah to see what it can teach us about finding God.

Scripture

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I KINGS 19:11-15A

The LORD said to Elijah... "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." 15 Then the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way..."

Questions

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1. Do ever feel like it is difficult to have a relationship with God?
2. What about having a relationship for God is most difficult for you?
3. Why can it be easiest to look for God in the mountain top experiences?
4. Why do you think the feelings from those experiences never last?
5. Where do you think God is "whispering" in your life?
6. What can you do this week to listen closer for God's whisper?



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Week 2 - "In Our Darkest Hour"

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Sometimes the wheels just fall off. People die, families are torn apart, friends hurt you, loved ones betray you, sickness, heartache, divorce, abuse, addiction, depression, loss, pain and suffering are sometimes a very real part of our lives. In the midst of these storms, where can we find God? Is he there? Does he care? Why does he feel so far away in these moments? Sometimes it is in our darkest hour that we are reminded that God loves us and is there for us, even when we have trouble finding Him.

Scripture

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MATTHEW 27:45-46

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

PSALM 22:1-2

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.

PSALM 27:7-9

Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.

Questions

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1. Have you ever experienced a time in your life where you felt God wasn't there?
2. What about that experience was most difficult?
3. Why does it feel like God is absent when we are going through difficult things?
4. What from this message was helpful?
5. How can you apply what you heard today in your own life?



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Week 30 - "How do you find God?"

No two people are exactly alike. We have different personalities, interests, talents, habits, likes and dislikes. We don't even interact with our friends in the same ways. With one person might be one way, with another friend we might be another. Why then do we think we all have to interact with God in the same way? What works for one person might not work for another. And it shouldn't have to. There are as many different ways to find God as there are different types of people. The important part is finding one that is meaningful to you.

Scripture

PSALM 139:1-5

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

MATTHEW 6:9-13

This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

I CORINTHIANS 12:4-6

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Questions

1. What ways have you tried to connect with God? (Prayer, scripture, worship)
2. Is there a particular way that seems most meaningful for you?
3. Are there ways that do not seem to be as meaningful for you?
4. Why does connecting to God seem so difficult sometimes?
5. Were there any ways to connect to God mentioned today that are new to you?
6. Are there any ways to connect to God mentioned today that you are interested in trying?
7. What will you do this week to connect to God more?



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Week 4 - "How do you find God?"

We are all fearfully and wonderfully made. The God that created you in His image also created every other person in His image also. What would happen if we begin to treat each other accordingly? If we acted and reacted to each other in a manner that acknowledge that each of us are children of the same God. What implications should that have on how we think, act and live in community with each other? By understanding and recognizing the presence of God that exists within each of us we can better spread the love of God to this world and experience a little more of heaven on Earth.

Scripture

MATTHEW 22:34-40

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

I JOHN 3:16-18

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for one another. If any one of you has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in you? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

Questions

1. What does it mean to you to be created in the image of God?
2. How can recognizing God's spirit in others change how you treat them?
3. When you hear someone's testimony or story why does that often change how you see them?
4. Do you think people would treat each other better or worse if we knew each other's stories?
5. What can you do this week to acknowledge presence of God in others?