

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**November 12, 2023. "What do we talk about when we talk about God? Who is God?"**

### **I Intro.**

We're quickly approaching the holidays. Things are running at full speed and we want you to be a part of this great community. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC, and that you can be an essential part of us moving forward. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

### **II Recap.**

We're in week two of looking at what we talk about when we talk about God. Let me give you a little 'where this is coming from' that will hopefully give it some context. One, many of us use personal phrases and terms to describe our relationship with God. Maybe they're from past experiences and how God has been there for us. Maybe we picked them up from family or a previous church life. However, when we use them, it's like using a southern phrase to a northerner. It just doesn't make any sense to them, and it doesn't connect. It means something to you...it's real. But it's strictly personal to you. Two, we all will admit God is infinite and beyond our understanding. And to think all of who God is can be captured in our words, or even that our words can be who God is, just really falls short of who God actually is. Third, if we're honest. Sometimes we struggle to even understand for ourselves what our words about God mean. They've become symbols of who God is, some important event in our past. But we don't have words to explain our words. Finally, we want each of us to be able to explain to another person, believer or not, what we mean when we talk about God. To be able to speak to others about God in a way they can understand, and it makes sense. That doesn't mean they'll agree. But they understand. The goal of this three Sunday series is to help us flesh out who we think God is, to find accurate and simple words to explain that, and for others to be able to find a connection (see why we did connection last month) with God.

### **III Sunday.**

Sunday we dove into the bottomless ocean of; **"Who is God?"** How do you even begin to answer that question? How can you try to fit all of who God is into some mere words? So today we're going to try to fit God into some kind of understanding that will give us something significant and meaningful to hold onto. As always, some questions to prime the pump.

**What words do you use to describe God?**

**Where did these words, understanding come from?**

Our scripture today is one simple passage. But with most passages it's loaded with lots of rich goodness about who God is. Read **John 1:14** and we'll pull the truths out that can help us.

**What jumped out to you from this passage?**

**What specific words or phrases spoke to you about who God is?**

**Three truths about God that describe him and can meet all of us where we are.**

Each of these are super intuitive.

**1. God is WITH us.**

We cannot underplay or overestimate the importance and significance of this truth. *“The Word became human and made his home among us”*. If God is everywhere, we have this story of Advent we’re about to enter into, then we know that God is always among us. We can never be in a place God isn’t. Psalm 139:7-12 tells us there is no place we can be that God isn’t also there. So, what does that mean for us? The most powerful gift is not always being saved from everything that happens to us. You often don’t feel that in the middle of what you’re going through. But looking back, you can see how that event made you a better you. Greatest celebration, joy, ONLY comes OUT OF the greatest struggle and suffering. **The greatest gift is not going through that thing alone.** Remembering the truth- God is with us. And in your understanding, experience, sharing about God. You can talk about how you have experienced God being with you.

**2. God is FOR us.**

Considering the Job story from last week, this may be the most difficult to believe in and feel consistently. We just have to be honest and real about this. No one wants us to just gloss over this, or pretend it’s not a real struggle. But we have to wrestle with this understanding in light of this part of the verse. *“He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.”* What does it mean? Because we can tend to define ‘for us’ in the same way we tend to define what is ‘fair’. And that is always in our favor. Like judging the officiating in football games. *“For us”* actually means for our ultimate benefit, not just what we want in the moment. We know this deep down, don’t we? *“For us”* means God’s deepest ultimate desire is for us to know him and be fully free. That’s what *“God is for us”* means.

**3. God is AHEAD of us.**

This is the one we often hold onto the most, and don’t always know what it actually means for us. *“And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son”*. Little English nerdfest. *“Have seen”* is ‘present perfect’. It means something happened or you experienced something in the past that is related to the present. It’s always been a part of your life. In this passage it’s the past, still in the present, which then promises for the future. **It has, it is, and it will be.** What does it mean? This isn’t God bulldozing the obstacles and frustrations out of our way. God isn’t our magic genie, or wish granter. Unexpected things, not caused by us, will make our lives difficult. They may even devastate us...for the moment. *“God is ahead of us”* is not a God who has planned out your whole life. You do get a say in the direction your life goes. God has already designed a life that moves you towards him and towards freedom and peace. God has given us the intelligence, free-will, freedom, to decide how we will walk that path. He is ahead of us wooing us towards freedom and peace. Not trouble or struggle free. But the things we need to handle all life throws at us.

**IV Challenge.**

The challenge. Since God is relational, to himself, and with us; **“How can we live each of these out in growing our relationship with God?”**