

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

**Sunday May 3, 2020 "Surely it was happening, all around us, it is true...and we couldn't see it. Learning to see all the things God has and wants for us.."**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to watch the live stream service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

### **II Checking in.**

So, how is everyone doing? Here we are right at day 50 in this...whatever 'this' is. Did that number shock you? That's a long time. We are still plugging along. Taking care of things behind the scenes, working on both providing opportunities for growth and learning, taking care of the facilities at the church, and preparing for that eventual time in the future when we can gather again. If there is ANYTHING you need, or ideas or suggestions you have, please pass them our way. We feel just as isolated as you, and we want to maintain that connection with each of you.

### **III Sunday.**

Sunday we began a new series, with kind of a silly name. The series is called "*Surely*", and we played with the name Shirley a little bit just to have some fun. Surely is a word seen in scripture as the 'ah-ha' moment when the light comes on, about some realization of a truth that was there all along. "*Surely*" being defined as; ***It's an obvious truth that should be apparent, we should know this, but we needed some help in discovering it.***

We all should be at a place knowing there are things we don't know. We can only take in so much info, ideas, and entertain only so many thoughts. So, there has to be this flexibility Kristen talked about last week, that allows us to experience God in new and different ways. This realization is built onto that understanding we talked about two weeks ago, and that is nurturing a sense of holy wonder and curiosity. Humility should lead us to the realization that our faith and understanding AND practice of it should constantly be maturing and growing as we do.

And so the "*surely*" life, is a life poised and positioned to experience God in new and different ways. This is the classic; "*I was this old when I learned this*". So, some opening questions to get us thinking about what the "*surely*" life would look like for us.

**Think about your first faith experiences and journey. How did you understand God early on? What experiences have you had, things you've learned, that have changed those early understandings?**

**Where is your understanding of God being challenged even now?**

The scripture Sunday was a specific story cut from the life of Jacob. The story of Jacob is a long and convoluted tale of this lineage of the same family. Beginning with Abraham, whom God had chosen to be his special people, and all the in's and out's of their desire, and often blowing it, to live for this God who had promised them great things. If you want some background on Jacob, go all the way back to Genesis 25, but for the sake of this story you can simply read **Genesis 28:1-22**. This is such a small slice in the life of Jacob, but we can still see some things he did well, to help us live this "surely" life.

**But first, what jumped out to you from this passage?**

**How do you think Jacob was able to have and understand this experience with God?**

Kal said there were two things, part of Jacob's life, that helped him experience God in this new way.

**1. Have to have a foundation of growing intimacy and trust, to be open to experience God.**

As dysfunctional and messed up Jacob was, and he was the poster child of messedupness, he had a close intimate connection and relationship with God. Not only was God still with Jacob, he showed up in his life in a profound way, spoke to him specifically, Jacob was at a place to hear from God and know it was him. This seems to be undeniable evidence that no matter what we do, what GIANT mistakes we make, we are never too far gone that God can't and doesn't want to reach out to us. We can work to continually grow our relationship with God. Jacob had a foundational relationship with God that let him know it was God, and that he could experience God in new ways.

**So, how can we get stuck, stale, lifeless in our understanding and relationship with God?**

**What causes us to get to a place where we don't have any new experiences with God?**

This is what we think we can learn from this truth. This foundation of growing an intimacy and trust in God is NOT our certainty about him. God is big, infinite, and can do anything he pleases. Our certainty cannot be bound in our understanding, (knowledge of him), but rather our closeness and trust in him. So when God decides to do something different, something we've never experienced before, we can know it's God, because our certainty is that he is God, not what we know about him.

**Who in your life do you trust because you know them?**

**How does that affect your relationship with them?**

**How can this understanding of trust be applied to your relationship with God?**

**2. Encountering God moves us to action.**

And then when Jacob had this encounter, he knew it was God, it moved him to action. This is one of those truths we know, but often rationalize ourselves out of. We've beat this truth to death, but western Christianity tends to reduce living out your faith as just agreeing with the right list, (and it's always the one we hold), of beliefs. And everything in scripture seems to point to our actions rather than our beliefs as the foundation and evidence of a faith lived out well.

**Where in your life might you be more concerned about 'right beliefs' than 'right actions'?**

**IV Challenge.**

This “*Surely*” life is a life of being open to the movement of God. recognizing there is always more to learn, understand, and experience when it comes to our relationship with God. And living a life certain enough in who God is, not our understanding of him, and flexible enough to know when it’s him when we encounter him. And then to actually act when we have that encounter.

Kal then closed with these four questions.

**1. Do I have confidence in my relationship with God, growing (intimacy and trust), that I would know him when I felt/saw/heard/experienced him?**

What do I need to do to grow that ability?

**2. Is my knowledge of God flexible enough in my confidence, to be open to experience him in new ways?**

Where in my beliefs about God might have I made God in my image, and miss new ways he can move?

**3. What do I need to build into my relationship with God that I can know it’s him, when it’s in a different way?**

What habits and practices can grow my connection, and ability to sense God?

**4. And, is my life built and designed in such a way, (there is margin to move), to respond to something new from God?**

Do I have space in my life to hear, and room to respond, to the direction of God?

The “*Surely*” life begins with cultivating a life with God, that is a strong enough foundation for you to trust, and flexible enough for you to be open to the movement of God in new and different ways.

“*Surely*” you’ll do this now.