

Glory Revealed: Knowing God's Name

SLIDE 2

Happy Mother's Day.

I want to say that and mean it — and I also want to say that I know today is not a simple day for everyone in this room. Mother's Day can hold joy and grief in the same breath. For some of you, your mom is gone. For some, the relationship is complicated. For some, you're still waiting and hoping for the title of mother. And for me personally, this year has a tender edge to it — on Friday I attended the funeral of my cousin. She was a young mom. She fought hard, and she is gone. And her kids will grow up with Mother's Day having a different weight to it forever.

So I want to hold that gently. We don't gloss over the hard things here.

And — today we celebrate. Because motherhood is hard. And beautiful, and rewarding and incredibly humbling and sanctifying. So happy Mother's Day.

I am a mom of five. And right now my kids span basically every stage of human life.

SLIDE 3 (To the slide tech - please keep this slide up until I prompt you to change the slide - this is only for going into slide 4 - the rest you can change as you follow along)

My oldest just turned 18 — he's graduating this spring —

and my youngest is 5. Which means I am simultaneously helping someone figure out how to be an adult and still wiping noses and buckling car seats.

One thing that has been happening in our family recently that is completely new territory for me as a mom — we now have a child in a pretty serious relationship. Up until this point, none of my kids have shown any interest in dating. None. Zero. But all of a sudden this one is listening to love songs, always on the lookout for nice gifts to buy his girl, and we have even gone so

far as to buy a ring. It is serious. And to be honest — I am not quite ready for this. But you know what they say: when the heart knows, the heart knows.

Here's a photo of my son with his ring.

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He's five. Her name is Tovah — she lives 9 hours away and we see her once a year, but whether she knows it or not, they are getting married when they grow up. I have been told this is not up for discussion.

The Customization Problem (~2 minutes)

And honestly? As a mom of five — with one heading off into the world and one planning his wedding at 5 — I have learned that you cannot control much. But one thing we are all really good at in this era? Customizing everything else.

We live in a time when we can customize everything. Your coffee order, your Netflix feed, your social media — they all show you exactly what you already want to see.

We can even do this with God. I know I have.

The Pictures We Carry (~3 minutes)

Here's the thing: we all have a picture of God in our heads. I mean that internal image. The one that shapes how you pray, how you respond when life falls apart, how you feel when you're alone.

That picture might be accurate. It might be completely made up. And what I want us to catch this morning is this:

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How we think about God matters.

Who we think He is, who we say He is matters. It actually dictates everything in your life. What you believe about God shapes who you become.

There is a professor in Chicago who taught a class on Jesus. At the beginning of the semester he would give his class 2 surveys. The first was a set of questions about the student: what they like, dislike, believe and so on.

The second was the same set of questions, but this time about Jesus. He said 90% of the time the answers were exactly the same.

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For a lot of us, we have created God in our image — He agrees with us on everything. He hates all the people you hate. He would have voted for the person you voted for, clearly. So we create this God that is tame, that we can control, and that mirrors us.

Now don't beat yourself up — this is the most ancient, temptation we have struggled with going back to Adam and Eve: to decide for ourselves what God is like.

Or maybe you have a version of God that looks like this:

The Stern Accountant — this God keeps meticulous records. Every mistake, every failure — it's all there. He's disappointed. If you pray too casually, He notices. If your quiet time isn't long enough, He's keeping score.

The Distant CEO created the universe and is doing important cosmic stuff. But your life? Your problems? He's probably too busy to notice.

Or a really popular one these days — the Buddy Jesus God — who just wants you to be happy. He'd never ask you to do anything uncomfortable. His main job is to make your life easier.

If you recognize yourself in one of these, welcome. You're in good company. I've definitely rotated through a few of these versions myself. But here's the thing: none of these is actually who God is. And that's the problem — and also the solution.

The Question That Changed Everything (~2 minutes)

Have you ever had something happen — the phone call, the test result, the relationship that fell apart — and before you even had time to think, something in you whispered: God must be punishing me. He's mad at me. This wouldn't be happening if He was actually for me. Maybe your deal fell through. Maybe you got the diagnosis. Maybe you did everything right and it still unraveled. And that voice was right there before you even realized it.

The Setting: God's Names Throughout Scripture (~1.5 minutes)

In the Bible, there's a moment where Israel has turned away from God. Moses has just gone up Mount Sinai and received the 10 commandments — and while he was gone the Israelites grew impatient and created a golden calf to worship. God's so angry He threatens to destroy them all. But Moses intercedes, and God relents — sort of. He says He'll take them to the promised land, but He won't go with them. He withdraws His presence.

Imagine that devastation. The people mourn. They remove their ornaments and stop celebrating.

Moses goes to God, troubled. He basically says: "You're telling us to go forward, but You're not coming with us? How will people know Your favor is on us? How will we be any different from any other nation?"

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Let's read it. Exodus 33:17–23:

"And the Lord said to Moses, 'This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.' Moses said, 'Please show me your glory.' And he (the LORD) said, 'I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name The Lord.'"

Moses makes this bold request of God after God relents — asking God to show him His glory. In Hebrew, glory doesn't mean fame or great achievements like we think in the West. In Hebrew, glory = presence and beauty. Moses was asking to see God for who He really is.

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Did you notice what God said He will do? He says: I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name.

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Here's something incredible about Scripture: throughout the Bible, we learn God's name in pieces. People call Him by different names that describe different aspects of who He is. In Genesis 1, He's called Elohim — God, the Creator. In Genesis 17, Abraham knows Him as El Shaddai — God Almighty, the Sovereign One. In Exodus 3, Moses encounters Him at the burning bush, and God reveals His name as Yahweh — "I AM WHO I AM," But here's what's unique: there is only

one place in all of Scripture where God Himself proclaims His name and reveals what that name means. That place is Exodus 34.

The Setting: One Encounter (~1 minute)

God tells Moses to come back to Mount Sinai. Moses carves out new stone tablets — the first time God carved them, but this time Moses has to do it. He climbs the mountain early in the morning.

And here's what happens: God descends in a cloud and stands with Moses. And God proclaims His name.

This is the one and only place where God describes Himself directly. Not through a prophet. Not through a parable. This is the most quoted passage of Scripture in the entire Bible — once you see it, you see it everywhere.

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Let's read what God says. Exodus 34, verses 6 and 7:

"The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

Think about what God could have said. He could have said: "I am all-powerful. All-knowing. Omnipresent. No one else is like me in the universe." And all of that is true. But God doesn't say any of it. This is God's revelation of His glory. This is His Name.

God Proclaims His Name (~11 minutes)

I want to walk through each of the characteristics God says He is. Let's read

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"The Lord, the Lord"

God repeats His name twice. In ancient Hebrew, repetition was used for emphasis. It's like saying: "I need you to really hear this. Pay attention. This is who I am."

The Lord here is actually YAHWEH in the original Hebrew. When you see LORD capitalized in your Bible, it is a translation for YAHWEH. One of the main reasons we don't have Yahweh in our Scriptures is because a few hundred years before Jesus, the Jewish people stopped saying Yahweh — they were so afraid of breaking the commandment "Thou shalt not take my name in vain" — and so they said Adonai instead, which translates to "the lord." Scholars kept that tradition. But the problem is that Lord is a title — it's not intimate. Not relational. Yahweh is His Name. And knowing His name gives us this personal, relational aspect. It is the foundation for everything that follows.

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"A God merciful and gracious"

These two words are paired together in ancient Hebrew. Merciful can be translated as compassionate. The Hebrew word, Rahum, has a root meaning "womb" — the idea is the feeling a mother has for her newborn. Fierce, protective, tender love.

For some of us, this picture may not connect because of what we experienced growing up. Your family may have been so warped that you have no idea what compassionate parenting feels like. For some of us, this will tap deep into our souls — because we know that feeling of fierce compassion toward our kids. There is no love like a mother's love for her child.

And this is how God feels about us. Compassion is a feeling word. Gracious is an action — in Hebrew it means to show grace or favour. Like when a parent comes to the rescue when their child needs help. So when we come before God in worship, in our morning prayers, or in our moment of need — we come before a God who first feels compassion toward us and then wants to move to action. I'm going to say that again, because some of you need to hear it: when you come before God, His first feeling toward you is compassion and mercy — and He wants to move on your behalf.

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"Slow to anger"

The Hebrew phrase for "slow to anger" literally means "long of nostril." I'm not kidding. When you get angry, you purse your lips and breathe through your nose — God has a long nostril. He is slow.

But notice — it's not that God doesn't feel anger. He does. Unlike our anger, He doesn't have a temper or fly off the handle.

Here's the difference: Our anger is usually unjust — coming from wounded ego, wanting revenge. It's quick to flare up and disproportionate to the offense. But God's anger comes from parental love — the kind of fierce anger a mother feels when someone harms her child, when predators target the innocent, when evil destroys what should be safe. His anger is just, patient, and perfectly timed.

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"Abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Abounding means overflowing — like a spring gushing water endlessly.

Steadfast love in the original Hebrew means covenant love: unfailing, loyal, committed. The kind of love that doesn't depend on your performance — it's simply yours.

Faithfulness means God is reliable and trustworthy. You can count on Him. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

We can often look at our reality and say, "I believe God is loving and faithful, but why doesn't it feel like I see it?" We compare God's promises to our circumstances, and they don't line up. We think if God is faithful, we won't experience suffering. But that's not true. God's faithfulness doesn't guarantee an easy life. It guarantees His presence. His steadfast love doesn't promise we'll avoid pain — it promises He'll never abandon us in it. Not a trouble-free life, but a God who is present, reliable, and committed through every season.

And here's something important: God mentions His love twice in this description. It bookends everything else. His justice, His patience, His refusal to clear the guilty — all of it is held within the context of His overwhelming, steadfast love.

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"Keeping steadfast love for thousands"

His love extends through generations. It's not just for this moment. It's for the long haul — for your children and grandchildren. That's not grudging tolerance. That's intentional, continuing commitment.

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"Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin"

God forgives. Actually forgives. Not holds it over your head. Not brings it up later. Not secretly resents you for it. He lets it go as far as the east is from the west. When we repent, God forgives.

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"But who will by no means clear the guilty"

And here's where it gets real, and can be uncomfortable in our culture. God also doesn't pretend sin doesn't matter. He doesn't waive consequences or ignore justice. He's merciful, but He's not careless about truth or accountability.

Because Yahweh is just, He is after a world where there is no evil. No sickness, no anxiety, no depression, no divorce, no betrayal, no fatherless families, no exploitation of women and children. Because Yahweh is just, He cannot stay silent. And this is the good news — God will put an end to evil once and for all.

God is just AND God is forgiving. He will forgive those who repent and will not forgive those who do not.

Slide 18

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation"

This section can make us go 'what' — but it is part of the whole context of how God reveals His character to Moses.

God isn't punishing innocent children for their father's sins. Rather, He's describing two things: First, if children do not repent and turn from the sin their fathers lived in, they will become responsible for those sins. Second, sin has real consequences that ripple through families. A parent's addiction, their betrayal, their violence — these have natural consequences that affect their children's futures.

But look at the scale: God keeps His love for thousands of generations, and speaks of consequences only to the third and fourth generation. His mercy far outweighs His justice.

After Yahweh finishes revealing His name, we read this:

"Moses immediately knelt low on the ground and worshiped."

Like Moses, the revelation of His Name — of His Glory — should cause us to worship. And we don't have to worship God to get Him to like us, or to manipulate His compassion toward us. We don't worship to make up for the bad things we have done. He is already slow to anger and forgiving. We worship because of who He is.

Beholding His Glory (~3 minutes)

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In 2 Corinthians 3:12–18, Paul writes:

"Since we have such a hope, we are very bold... And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

There's a reason Paul uses the image of a veil — in the old covenant, there was a barrier between God and His people. But Christ removed that veil. Now we can see God's glory directly.

And we stare at God's glory through His Name - Yahweh from His own mouth, from His own heart — not what we think He is like, not what social media tells us, not what we were taught growing up — but with a clear vision of who the Lord actually is. When we behold Him, something happens. We're transformed. Not by effort or willpower, but by the Spirit.

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When that lie whispers to you — "God's mad at you," "He doesn't care about your small problems," "You need to clean yourself up before you come to Him" — I want you to stop. **Go back to His Name. Does this thought line up with who God says He is?** "The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious" — I didn't have to go any further.

An Invitation (~1 minute)

Maybe you don't know Yahweh — not really. Maybe this is the first time you've heard Him described this way, and something in you is stirring. Maybe someone dragged you here today, or you wandered

back after a long time away, carrying a version of God that was small or cold or distant or angry. Can I tell you something? The same Name Moses encountered on that mountain — merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love — that Name became flesh. Jesus is the full revelation of who God is. And He came not to condemn you, but so that you could actually know the Father. If you've never said yes to that — today is a good day to start.

Conclusion — His Name (~2 minutes)

Because it is His Name that transforms us. Not your effort. Not your perfection. Not your achievement. His Name.

It is His Name that holds freedom. Not rules. Not regulations. Not trying harder. His Name.

His name is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe.

His name is our refuge and fortress; those who know His name trust in Him.

In His name we find salvation — there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.

In His name everyone who calls upon the Lord will be saved.

In His name we are never forsaken when we seek Him.

In His name we can ask anything, and He will do it so that the Father may be glorified.

In His name the lame walk and the weak are made strong.

In His name we speak boldly and go out to serve others.

It is His name that is above all other names. At His name every knee shall bow. His name is written as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His name deserves all glory, honor, and praise from the ends of the earth.

Yahweh is His Name. The Lord. The God who is present, merciful, gracious, slow to anger, faithful, and just.

And when we call upon His Name, when we truly know who He is — we know His glory.

Closing Prayer

"Lord, show me Your glory. I pray for every person this morning who needs Your Glory — Your Name — to shine over hidden places. Hidden hurts, hidden betrayals, hidden rejection, hidden pain, hidden sin. Help us to know Your Name. Not who I think You should be, not who I've been told You are — but who You actually are. For those that feel numb, release them. For those that need refreshment. For those that need healing — desperate healing. For those that need open wombs. For those who desire spouses. For those who are drowning in their marriages — a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Help me to see Your mercy, Your grace, Your faithfulness, Your justice, Your love. And as I behold You, transform me. Make me more like You. Because when I know Your Name truly, I can't help but give You glory — not because I have to, but because I've seen who You are, and it's glorious."

His Name. That changes everything.