Title: The Immeasurable, Intimate, and Infallible Mercy of God

Sermon Summary: This sermon, part of a Thanksgiving series called "Discovering God's Eternal Mercy," draws from Psalm 103:11-14 to explore the boundless nature of God's mercy toward fallen humanity. The pastor begins by establishing an honest appraisal of the human condition, arguing that we cannot truly appreciate the height of God's mercy without first reckoning with the depth of our sinfulness. Using the cosmic imagery of the Psalmist, the sermon presents God's mercy as immeasurable, stretching beyond the reach of any telescope or mathematical calculation. It then moves to the intimate dimension of that mercy, portraying God as a Father who knows our frame and is mindful of our weakness. Finally, the sermon declares God's mercy to be infallible, grounded in his perfect and exhaustive knowledge of each person, and made concrete through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. The sermon concludes with a call not merely to understand God's mercy intellectually, but to receive it, rest in it, and respond to it with humble and obedient hearts.

Key Points:

- Before grasping the magnitude of God's mercy, we must take an honest appraisal of our sinfulness, recognizing that we are connectionally detached from God, creationally debased in character, correctionally defiant when God corrects us, and constitutionally dependent as creatures made from dust

- God's mercy is immeasurable, illustrated by the Psalmist's use of cosmic language comparing it to the height of the heavens above the earth and the endless distance between east and west, a distance that can never be fully traversed or quantified

- Because God is infinite and operates under no constraint or limitation, his mercy is also infinite, meaning no quantity or depth of human sin can exhaust or outpace it

- God's mercy is intimate, expressed through the image of a compassionate father who knows his children's frame and is mindful of their weakness, using the Hebrew word "yadah," meaning to know deeply and personally

- God's mercy is infallible because his knowledge of each person is perfect, complete, and exhaustive, making him uniquely qualified to show mercy in ways that are truly best for each individual

- The cost of mercy was not poetic or symbolic but literal, accomplished through the death of Jesus Christ, who bore sin on behalf of humanity so that sinners might receive the righteousness of God

- God's mercy was prepared before the foundation of the world, demonstrating that his compassion toward humanity was not reactive but intentional and eternal

- Receiving God's mercy should produce humility, gratitude, and a desire to walk in newness of life rather than casual or flippant attitudes toward sin

- Those working in ministry contexts such as addiction and recovery are called to reflect God's mindfulness and patience toward others who are struggling, rather than rushing to judgment

Scripture Reference:

- Psalm 103:11-14, the primary text, describing the immeasurable loving kindness of God, the removal of transgressions, and God's compassionate knowledge of human frailty

- Isaiah 59:1-2, describing how iniquity creates separation between humanity and God

- Isaiah 55:8-9, declaring that God's thoughts and ways are as high above human ways as the heavens are above the earth

- Proverbs 1, referencing God's call that went unheeded and the refusal to receive correction

- James 4:17, describing the sin of knowing what is right and choosing not to do it

- Genesis 2:7, recounting God forming man from dust and breathing life into him

- Malachi 3, describing God sparing his own as a man spares his own son

- Romans 11, referenced in the context of God's independence in thought and counsel

- Daniel 4, referenced regarding God doing according to his will among the inhabitants of the earth

- Ephesians 1, describing God choosing believers in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless

- 2 Corinthians 5:21, describing Christ being made sin on behalf of humanity so that believers might become the righteousness of God

- Romans 5, referenced with the phrase describing Christ dying for sinners while they were yet ungodly

- 1 John 3:5, stating that Christ appeared to take away sins and that in him there is no sin

- Romans 11:36, declaring that from God and through God and to God are all things, to him be glory forever

Stories:

- The pastor recounts a family story about his oldest daughter, Carrie, who removed family photos from a shared collection, keeping only those that included herself, illustrating how we exploit relationships for personal gain, which the pastor connects to the concept of transgression against God

- The pastor references a Ricky Skaggs bluegrass song in which a boy ignores his father's warning not to cross a flooded creek, rides his bike across anyway, is knocked down by a rock that had rolled into the creek bed, and must be rescued by his father, illustrating humanity's pattern of correctional defiance toward God

- The pastor shares an anecdote about his daughter Sarah Jane, who learned to show immediate remorse after wrongdoing, which initially moved her father's heart to compassion, but was eventually revealed to be a strategy to avoid discipline, illustrating how people can take advantage of God's mercy just as children learn to work around a tenderhearted parent

- The pastor references a conversation with a woman in a California church who objected to singing a hymn lyric describing herself as a worm, but who later, after growing in grace, came to understand the depth of her own sinfulness and the corresponding height of God's mercy

- The pastor mentions his own father's habit of bringing up past mistakes even decades later, using it to contrast human memory with God's perfect and merciful mindfulness of who we are and what we are made of