

this is our God

Last week, we kicked off a new series in Psalm 103 called "This is our God." If you're new to the faith or church, you may have a wrong perception of God. It can even be the case if you've been a Christian for a long time. Thankfully, Psalm 103 helps clear up many of our misconceptions.

Discussion Questions:

1. Looking back at your sermon notes, what encouraged or challenged you the most?

Read Psalm 103:6-12

2. A.W. Tozer famously said, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." With that said, what are some common misconceptions about God? What are some of the reasons for these misconceptions?
3. Why is it true that what we believe about God shapes how we live? Give some examples of how this can be true when it comes to interacting with others or facing various trials.

How you experience the next 8 hours of your life will largely be determined by what you believe to be true about who God is. How you interact with people today will be influenced by who you believe God to be. How you react to every situation you encounter today will be shaped by who you believe God is (or isn't). So many of us have a broken view of who God is—too often, we see Him as distant, cold, irritable, and impossible to please. There are so many complicated and underlying reasons why many of us might have taken up this warped view of God, but we have a choice each day: Will I believe that God is who I think He is? Or will I take Him at His word and believe He is who HE says He is?

4. Today's passage is full of foundational truths about God. In them, we see that God is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. When are you most likely to struggle to believe any of these characteristics of God? Why is growing deeper in the knowledge of God's love a lifelong journey?

Many of us have been privileged to grow up being told that Jesus loves us. Let us not take this simple truth for granted. The same God that made the galaxies, created photosynthesis, crafted the intricacies of the human brain, and holds the oceans like a drop of water in the palm of His hand—He made you, and He loves you. When the truth of this gets into your soul, it changes you. It changes how you live. It changes how you love. It's often through many trials that the truth of God's love sinks deep into our souls. Through these various experiences, what we once knew in our minds is driven into our hearts.

5. In verse 7, we're told that God "revealed" His character to Moses and the people of Israel. Give some examples of this from the Old Testament. Why do we learn more about God's character in the pit than at the pinnacle?

In verse 7, David reflects on the ways and acts displayed by the Lord. These works were shown in the exodus miracles and occurred throughout Israel's wilderness experience and at Mount Sinai. "It was the training of sons." (Kidner, Psalms 73-150, 366).

James 1:2-4, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

6. In verses 9-10, David lists four acts of God that result from His being merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Identify these acts and discuss how/why we're tempted to lean in the opposite direction when grieved.

(1) He will not constantly accuse us (2) Nor remain angry forever (3) He does not punish us for all of our sins (4) He does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.

7. On our own, we stand rightfully convicted of our sin and fully deserving of its punishment (Romans 6:23). But God, in His rich mercy, made a way for us to be saved (Romans 5:8-11). His love extends as high as the heavens (Ps. 103:11). And He doesn't just forgive; He hurls our sins into the ocean's depths (Ps. 103:12). What do these immeasurable distances communicate regarding God's love and mercy toward us? Why should we continually meditate on these truths (Psalm 119:90-93)?

Christ-Centered Exposition, Exalting Jesus in Psalms 101-150

"How can one describe God's great love? David attempts to use immeasurable distances to get the point across. Paul does something similar in the New Testament (Eph. 3:18-19). First, David goes vertical. Words fail to convey the magnitude of God's love. So, the massive love of God, the loyal love of God, displayed to unworthy Israel is compared to the grandeur of the heavens. Whenever you look into the clear blue skies or behold a distant star, remind yourself that God's mercy is greater still (Williams, Psalms 73-150, Kindle).

The Lord's pardoning love for Israel needs another directional illustration, so David goes horizontal, east to west. Remind yourself daily of the comprehensiveness of God's forgiveness (Isa. 43:25; Mic. 7:19).

8. What's one personal takeaway from today's study you can focus on applying in your life this week?