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Discovering the God Who is There

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Well hello. There you are again. I love being here. I love worshiping with you, talking with you, listening to you, and sometimes talking at you or, well, that's probably a little harsh, but I just...that's fun. God in the Hands of Angry People, what a great series.

My earliest years, were in a land that had many gods from age three to age seven I lived in Colonial, India in the late forties. It's a land of caste systems, not just the Indian systems, but the British system, it's a land of people who were there as monotheists, the British, primarily, Muslim community, monotheists and the Hindu community polytheism, lots of gods, but I never because I was small, I didn't have a conversation about sort of the character of God in any kind of intense way until I was a church planter age 26, University of Illinois 1968. And I was invited by Intersarsity Christian fellowship to come on campus to speak to students in a student dormitory in a hall, the m-o was that you'd go and speak for 15 minutes or 10 minutes, whatever it was, and then take 15 minutes of questions as opposed to like this where I speak for 30 minutes and take no questions, you know. So I spoke for 15 minutes on this God who loves us, the one we were singing about tonight. And then I said, so any questions? A kid raised his hand and I said yes sir. And he said he sent me to hell. And I said, well, no, I don't want to do that, next question. And the guy said, how dare you walk in here and talk about a loving God when there are people getting slaughtered in Vietnam, when people are dying like flies in the Barrios of Rio de Janeiro and kids and babies are being eaten by rats in the slums of Chicago. What kind of a God, who is that? And I'm, I'm staggered because I'm not used to like being confronted like that, and I just said, um, I don't, I don't know that God because the God you're talking about is not the God of this book and I held up the Bible and I said, I don't know who's doing all that, but I don't think it's, I think it's probably us. I think we're doing that, either our actions or our inactions are allowing that to happen.

So here we are, Gods in the Hands of an Angry People. And those guys were angry. OK? This started out with Pastor Mark saying God made us in his image and we've been returning the favor ever since. I love that line. Joel came along, Pastor Joel and talked about counterfeit gods, about the secret service god, you serve him and bad things won't happen. Or the Frankenstein god, piece together with only the things I like. Or the slot machine god, who exists to bring me happiness. Or the association god, who is someone else's faith its faith by association. Or the thoughtless god, I'm just a mob boss, authoritarian, don't think just do it. Or the emotional god, I always have to feel that god. Heather came along, Pastor Heather and talked about the Old Testament, God, I loved her line, our bad view of God most often comes from there because we don't understand so many actions and she went on to say the Old Testament matters to us because it mattered to the New Testament writers. It matters to Jesus, it was his roots and it points us to Jesus and prepares the way. And the key question in that conversation was, did God really say that Genesis question, really? God said that? So truth is challenged by the enemy. She went on to say that it probably raises more, her talk was going to raise more questions than answers and I agree with that, but I had this thought, if I don't grapple with the questions,

probably I don't deserve answers. And Josh last week came along and talked about interpreting Jesus, grappling to understand what did he mean by that? Why did he say that? Why did he do that? How did he do that? He challenged us. Josh challenged us to challenge our assumptions across the divides, reach out and reconcile through Jesus.

So this series for me has posed one general question in various ways. If there is a God apart from me, what does that God like? Everybody has god's people say they're atheists. I say, baloney, you all worship something. You're going to worship someone most likely oneself or something or some idea or some cause or some system, practical atheism is out of the question in that regard. But what I have found in my life is what I want to share with you this evening. I've got a couple of points here. This is the first one. Knowing God is a journey of discovery. It's a journey of discovery. Now your intellect, which is good, but it isn't big enough to be God. Your intellect could help you in the process, it helps us move toward God, it can.

J Edwin Orr was a believing historian who happened to a chaplain on the Island of Mauritius during the Second World War. A young soldier came to him one night and said, Chaplain, I'm an atheist, and J Edwin Orr said, well, OK. He said, ah, let me just ask a question, I mean, since you've avowed that you are, you don't believe in a god out there somewhere, but let me ask you a question. Uh, how much knowledge of everything there is to know in the world do you think, do you think you have? Then the young man was like, well, I. He said, well, let me, let me give you a generous a really generous suggestion. Maybe of all the knowledge there is about everything and anything out there, you know, one percent of all there is to know, do you think son, that somewhere in that other 99 percent there might just be a god? The next day the kid came back and said, OK, I'm not an atheist, I'm an agnostic, there may be one but I can't know him, so they sort of went from there. But intellect can tilt me toward God, but it can't get me across the line, revelation of him carries me across the line. Creator God contributes to that revelation. Theologians call what we see out there in nature general revelations. It's not specific, it's general revelation.

I've just in the in the last six weeks I've been on the Oregon coast watching the breakers smash into the, into the rocks and I've been with grand-kids to the Grand Canyon and then of course we live near the Rockies and you look at those things and you say something profound like, wow, you know, all that sorta stuff. I could stand at my house in the summertime and if I'm facing north, the Rockies would be on the left 10 miles away and the Great Plains going out forever that way, the High Plains going that way and depending on the storms that come through, you can see lightning crackling over the smacking into those mountains and hear the thunder roll over and on this side if there's a break in the clouds and the sun comes through, there's a rainbow over here. So you get the power of God and the beauty of God all at one shot. There's something about his presence, whether it's general or specific that's profound, so my question is, do you think that the God of the big picture of the power and beauty, if you will, could have an interest in my tiny picture? Might there be a chance? Might there be a possibility? Well, the Old Testament poet, he was a poet warrior. David was his name. He was a songwriter, king. He goes there, writes a song that has it all. It's specific, it's strategic, it's personal, it's universal and he expresses in the middle of it, his awe and his frustration. Like all in one song. Yeah, YouTube should be so lucky. Anyway, it starts this way. Psalm 139 one through four reads like this,

¹ You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.

Now that's personal, that's intensely personal. In this series, we've explored the why, the what, the when, and we always land on the who. Every message has landed on the who. I'd like to just reflect on a couple of things about that in this phrase, who is this God and where is he? We haven't gotten to the, were really. I'd like to talk about the where.

Last weekend I spoke at a men's retreat up in Estes Park, Colorado and I was sitting at breakfast with a university professor and some young folks, they were in their thirties, which for some of you is like almost gone but for me, they're like babies. And this is the question that he asked me in the group. He said, I want you to come talk to these guys they're in a small group together. This is the question he asked. He said, Dick, how do you imagine a God that you can't see? How do you imagine a God that you can see? Years back in the seventies there was a Texas oil man who came to the Lord by the side of a Texas road having read Chuck Colson's or C. S. Lewis's Mere Christianity. His name was Keith Miller and he wrote some books, but he said, when I think about Jesus, I think about him up and a little to the left, you know, he used to say stuff like that. So the question, how do you imagine a God you can't see? I like this Einstein quote. *"Imagination is more important than knowledge for knowledge is limited to all we know, all we now know and understand while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand."* So how do I imagine him? How do I imagine God? Well, I can't. If God is spirit, how do you imagine spirit? How you do that? How do you quantify? How do you measure it or quantify it or see it? I mean, how many inches is God the Spirit or miles or foot pounds or kilowatts or gigabytes? If he's love and light and peace and relationship, what does that look like if it were all packaged? Well, it'll look like Jesus that's what it will look like. He says, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. If you had known him, God, the Spirit, you would know me. That's how he describes it. This is how Paul describes Jesus as an expression of God the Father. Colossians 1:15 through 20.

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the God that I can't calculate in gigabytes or foot-pounds, OK? the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. The first born over all creation for in him, all things were created, things in heaven on earth, visible and invisible had been created through him. Excuse me, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things have been created through him and for him,

So he's taking in governments, he's taking in people, he's taking in the Rockies, apparently.

17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

We sang about that tonight. But even when we have Jesus as a concrete example in scripture or as the disciples did, the apprentices did while they were walking here, we still struggled to understand. We struggled to wrap our minds. We often look, but we don't see clearly.

I was speaking at events or retreats some years ago in Montana. We were driving up north from Billings or some place and you western Montana people, if there are any here, you know where that is. And driving up and I was with this big old guy, a youth leader and a football player and we're driving up the highway and his huge truck with the big tires and sitting up high and he said, wow, look at those, look at that herd of elk over there on the hillside. Now I'm a kid from East Oakland, California. I'm not used to elk on the hillside. So I look and I see a hillside. I said, um, where, where was that? He said, right, right there. And I'm looking. I had lasik surgery on my eyes, long distance is good and I'm looking. I said I, I'm sorry, but I don't see, I don't see any elk. I just see some rocks out there and about that time one of the rocks moved because there are, there are so many times where we look, but we don't see. We look, but we don't see.

There's a passage that is one of my favorites that that applies to this. I've spoken to this theme before, but Mark the eighth chapter, Jesus has just fed 4,000 people and this is the dialogue that goes on. ¹¹The Pharisees religious types *came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven.* Now he's just fed 4,000 people with seven loaves. OK? They want us... ¹² *He sighed.* You can almost going, oh boy. *“Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.”* ¹³ *Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.* ¹⁴ *The disciples had forgotten to bring bread,* They were in bread up to their eyeballs just a little bit ago So it's understandable that they wouldn't like hang on to some. *And they forgot to bring bread except for one loaf* and this is not like a big love is like a pita pocket kind of loaf. *And they had with them in the boat.* ¹⁵ *“Be careful,” Jesus warned them. “Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.”* He's saying, watch out for the political and religious intrigues because when politics and faith get in bed together, it doesn't work. And these are power people. These are guys looking for power. ¹⁶ *They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.”*

¹⁷ *Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸ Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but this is like hard talk, eyes that fail to see, ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? He's saying how's your memory? ¹⁹ When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?”*

“Twelve,” they replied.

²⁰ *“And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?”*

They answered, “Seven.”

Then ²¹ *He said to them, “Do you still not understand?”*

And I read the text and I say, no. I love this. I've talked about this a fair amount, but I, but I love God's math. Goes something like this. If you have seven loaves, you can feed 4,000 people and you have seven baskets left over. Are you with me? If you have five loaves, you can feed a thousand people more and you have 12 baskets left over. How many do you imagine he could have fed with only one loaf. Want me to run that by again? OK, seven, four, seven, five, five, twelve. One, like a gazillion people with one loaf. I think he's trying to make a point. He saying boys, this is not about the bread. I can do bread on the backstroke. OK, this is not about the bread. This is about your heart. This is about how you see how you understand what you hear, where that takes you. It's much easier to feed a crowd of 5,000 with five loaves of bread than it is to soften a hard human heart. When you think about it, this idea of where the kingdom is, is a profound thing, but it's how it works that causes us some confusion. Josh spoke to at some last week. Here's this Jesus who's really different. You think he's going to do that and he does that and I love what Dorothy Sayers, the British mystery writer wrote about this. This is, this is what she wrote. *The Kingdom of Heaven,* "said the Lord Christ, "is among you. But what, precisely, is the Kingdom of Heaven? You cannot point to existing specimens, saying 'Look, here!' or 'Look, there!' You can only experience it. But what is it like, so that we may recognize it? Well, it is a change, like being born again and re-learning everything from the start. It is a secret, living power – like yeast. It is something that grows, like seed. It is precious like buried treasure, like rich pearl, and you have to pay for it. It is new, yet in a sense it was always there – like turning out a cupboard and finding there your own childhood as well as your present self; it makes demands, it is like an invitation to a royal banquet – gratifying, but not to be disregarded, and you have to live up to it; it is from the foundations of the world; it is to come; it is here and now; it is within you. It is recorded that the multitudes sometimes failed to understand." Well, I guess so how does that. Where is God? Where is he and where is this kingdom?

Listen to how the songwriter says it again later on in Psalm 1:39.

*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,*

I'm trying to run from God and I get on a plane to Dulles and fly to Katmandu and Jesus meets me at the airport. Says, how you doing? Yeah.

¹⁰ *even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.* ¹¹ *If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"* ¹² *even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*

Here is the God who is everywhere and as infrared eyes. When I think about his presence, when I think about where he is, he's here. If I go out on the sidewalk, he's there. If I go back to Windsor, Colorado, where I'm from, he's there. If I go by car, he's there. This idea that God is ever present, always here, available is a profound thing to me. That means I can talk to Him anywhere. I can talk to Him in my car, I can talk to Him on the bus, I can talk to Him in bed, I can talk to Him when I'm working out, I can talk to Him.

Discovery, point 2, discovery often happens in increments. The disciples didn't get it. They didn't get the bread thing and so Jesus goes on to show them who they are. This is the same chapter

Mark 8 ²² *They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.* ²³ *He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. And when he had spit on the man's eyes* for you medical personnel here, just hang on, I'm sorry, it doesn't sound hygienic, *spit on the the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"* ²⁴ *He looked up and said, "I see people; but they look like trees walking around."*

Maybe he had known what a tree looked like or maybe he had felt trees so he would know.

²⁵ *Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.*

I think this is a metaphor for who the disciples were, that they were learning in pieces, bits and pieces about this Jesus that they walked with. That's how I've learned about him over the last 76 years is in bits and pieces as I've walked with him because I get in different seasons in my life and he shows up in different ways. Not necessarily in different forms, but in different dimensions. I can't describe it very well for a person with as many words as I have and I feel a little frustrated that I can't describe it very well.

I have a friend, I haven't seen him for some years. His name was David, lived in this town. I met him here in 1993. He had been with the CIA for 30 years and when I met him, he was, um, on the national security team at the White House with a specialty in Asia. He told me this story. I met him when he was probably, he would've been in his seventies, maybe my age. And, uh, I said, David, how did you, how did you come to faith? How, how did you discover God, if you will? He said, uh, I had gone through horrific divorce. I'd gone through all kinds of stuff. And I, um, I went to be at a dinner at a big fundraising dinner in Chicago and I sat next to a woman who was not my ideal in terms of the kind of woman I wanted to be sitting next to. She was a very wealthy woman and, uh, she was quite verbal. And as we began to talk, what I found out that was she a delightful person. Just a delightful conversationalist. And at one point during the dinner she just turned to me and said, so David, do you know the Lord? And he said, it caught me off guard. But I said, no. And I prefer to keep it that way. She said, well, we're not going to let that happen. Said I'm going to have somebody come see you in the White House. Said a couple of, couple of weeks later, these two guys show up at the White House and they don't have ties, but they got trench coats on it, looked like the FBI buddy system. And he said, they came in, sat down and they didn't talk about God. They just hung out and just ask me questions. And, and we became friends and I started going to this, this little breakfast thing that they had. They talked about Jesus. I didn't buy any of that, but I just liked being with the guys and that's, that's how it worked. But I was going through a very difficult time at one point and I was just, there was an incident that happened that just shook me and I called my friend and I said, I don't know what to do.

And the fellow said, well, I'll drive over and meet you at the southwest gate of the White House. And uh, he picked me up and we drove out by the Potomac somewhere and we pulled over and I poured my heart out, told him what was going on. And I said, I don't, you know, I'm, I'm going

through hellish things and I don't believe in God. And I like you guys, but I just don't get that part and the friend said, well, why don't we ask God for a sign? He said really? Yeah, like that he would show himself to you. He said OK. So he just prayed. He said, you know, just show yourself to David and so that he knows that you're real. He said the next morning I got up to fly to speak to the Asia gathering, there's an Asia group up in New York City, landed at Laguardia and I was driving across the triborough bridge and, um, I wasn't driving, had a taxi guy driving me and uh, he said, he said, you want to give me the cash for the toll or I can. And so I handed him, a \$10 bill and he paid the toll and he handed me back, um, several \$1 bills. And when he did, I put them in my lap. And, uh, I looked down at the top \$1 bill and in Sharpie, broad Sharpie across the face of the bill, it said, God loves you. And he said, I've received hundreds, thousands of \$1 bills in my life, never had any of them said God loves you. And he said, I just shouted, stop the car while they're in the middle of the triborough bridge. And he said, finally the guy pulled off and he said, I just, it just shook me and affirmed all the way down, and he said, that started my journey toward Jesus because oftentimes we, we discovered him in increments, in bits and pieces, and you could go to his home in Greensboro, North Carolina tonight and framed up on the bedroom wall. There would be a \$1 bill that says, God loves you on it. When I, when I think about that, I say, well, that's like, that's like a miracle. That's extraordinary.

Point three, our miracles are God's normal. I think we probably live in a subnormal culture. And when God shows up, normal appears. Our miracles are God's normal. You know in the New Testament when you read it, most often calls these apparent anomalies to the natural order, calls them signs and wonders. I wander, I stumble along in his presence He's here, but I can't see Him, He looks like elk on the hillside, you know. I'm not necessarily looking for Him, but on occasion when my heart has a need or I begin to turn or I start looking beyond my own puny self, he lets me know he's there.

I was with a friend two days ago in Springfield, Missouri. We've been friends for a long time. He has two boys, tremendous young men now they're in their forties, still young men. And one of them really had a time of being a prodigal. His name is Chad when he was 20, he lived in Missouri and he was going to California actually, dear friend of my son and he was going to go be with my son Chris for some months before our son Chris got married. And Chad was on the run. He was doing stuff, he had been raised in a believing home, but he just, well, you know, some of you know how that is. You just say that's, there's, I don't want an association faith or an association, God I want, you know. And so he said I was doing stuff and my parents didn't know and I was. And he said, I got out on highway 40, interstate 40, just crossed the line from Texas into New Mexico. It's arid, it's just, it's high plains, it's just there's nothing out there. And he said, I had a blowout on my left front tire and the sun was starting to go down. And he said, I, I pulled over back in an area, not just off the road, back in an area, and I got the jack out and something was wrong with the jack and I and I couldn't get the tire and I just. And I was and I was getting desperate and I was scared. He said, I'm 20 years old and I could die out here. Somebody could come along and just kill me or the coyotes eat me or something. I don't know and he said, I just, I just in my, in my fear and in my desperation. He prayed the prayer that God always hears and that is God help me. And he said, I went out to try to wave cars by. He said, as I said, that I went out and tried to stop and nobody would stop their flying by 75, 80 miles an hour and all of a sudden there was an old beat up truck coming this other way, going lickety split as we used to say. And he said, I just, I see his taillights and the guy slams on his brakes, takes a turn, comes

across. And the reason I'm telling you this like I am, because I talked to Chad last night on the phone. I said, Chad, I want to tell this story, give me the details. He said, this guy whips across both lanes, comes over, gets out and here's this old guy. He's a native American guy, I don't know if he's Navajo or Hopi or Zuni or whatever. There are all those tribes right there. And he said, he just gets out. He's got cowboy boots and a hat and he walks over and he takes the, the uh, jack and he gets down and he jacks it up and he switches the tire out and he doesn't smile. He doesn't do anything. I'm trying to talk to him. He's just passive, impassive. He just fixes it, walks back, puts a thing in my trunk, and he walks back and gets it and I'm chasing him because my folks had given me some cash and said, yeah, and I said, please take some money. Please take some, take some money. He said, no, I don't want the money. He says, you just need to know this. I just came to tell you that God loves you. He said it got back in his truck and took off going west, going the direction I was going and I tried to see what it was and it had no license plate on his car. Now you say that's a weird story. I think that like that's the coolest story on the world. It says we can meet angels unaware and sometimes they drive old pickup trucks and wear cowboy hats. I'm just saying. Now he didn't come to Jesus right there, but he went deeper and darker before he came back, but that piece stayed in his spirit. That piece stayed in him and he looks back on it today and said, God did that for me. And he's always there, and I, in that moment that I called him, he showed up and are looking for meaning in other places as we heard, have heard earlier, like others have said, and we follow crazy lesser gods. He still is. He's calling, he's tracking, he's waiting for a look, a call, a question.

I had the privilege last, um, year of speaking to some business classes at Colorado State University where I live. I met a young man, sharp young guy. We had coffee, didn't talk about faith or anything, just talked about other stuff. A month ago I got a text saying, I'm about to graduate. Think I need faith, can we have coffee? So this past Monday we had coffee and I said, so how's it going? He's from another country, very sharp business major. He said, uh, you know, this, uh, this adulting thing, that's hard. But I've come to a place where I need more than a job. What I need is meaning for my life. I've gone through religious motions as a kid, but here's my question, how do I begin? How do I get started and I just, I'll call him John. I said, John, just the fact that you're asking the question tells me you've already begun. And he says, just talk to him. Just say, Jesus, come into my life, take all my crud, swap it out for your joy and peace. I said, would you like that? He said, absolutely, I'd like that. He said, how do I do that? I said, well, we just, you know, you can't see Him, but it's just like talking to me. So we're sitting outside of Starbucks. I said, would you like to just talk to him right here And just like, get the process going? He said, yeah. I would. I said, why don't you just follow me out loud, I'll say some stuff that I think you... So he said, OK, and I said, you know, we can do this with our eyes open, like we don't have to borrow heads or anything. So we're sitting there sort of looking at each other and I say, Dear God, this is John. He says, God, this is John. You know my heart. You know my heart. You know that I really need to swap out all of my sin for all of your goodness and all of your joy, and in that moment outside of Starbucks, the God who is showed up, the God who is there was discovered by another person just like so many of us have discovered him. He can do it in a picosecond or overtime all at once or in station or in stages, but this is what I know, one moment, real and vulnerable can change your whole life. He will do what he needs to get our attention. He calls us, but he doesn't force us and you say, which God is that like, I guess he the creator of all or the lover of one at a time. And I say yes. Does he give us covering grace or call us to be confronted by truth? Yes. Is he the Lamb of God who sacrificed for all of our sins; or

The Lion of Judah who carries all the authority in the universe? Yes. Does he affirm us with yes or correct us with no? Yes. Does he hunt us down or leave us to our own devices? No pun intended. And the answer is yes. He will come to us wherever we are, inward, outward, right side, up or upside down, and at that point, heaven meets earth. At that point, time is overwhelmed by eternity. Whenever you say, how do I start or I give up or God help me, or show me yourself, or I need a sign. Watch out!. He is here, he is there, he is everywhere, and when you acknowledge that, when you look, really look where your head can't get you, your spirit can.

I have a friend who's now gone and I've talked to you about him before, professor of spectroscopy, use of light for scientific measurement. Left the University of Illinois at age 54 to go start a university with a fellow named Loren Cunningham for a group called Youth With a Mission, but in his career at the U of I, and those of you who are academics understand that this is huge. He advised 68 PhD students in his career, that's a huge number of PhD students. He was brilliant in his field. He was a board member at the congregation where we were, and I won't go into the whole story, except to say I left to go be president of the college and a couple of years later he received what was called the Fisher Award from the American Chemical Society. The American Chemical Society is the largest scientific society in the world. 140 nations established in 1872 and they gave him this award. And they had a two day symposium at the Americana Hotel in New York City and all of his former students, many of them chairs of chemistry departments, Include, Romania and Athens and Alberta, Canada and Michigan State, they came and gave papers. Then they had a black tie dinner last night and they asked my friend Howard, to give a talk, a scientific talk, which he did for 30 minutes, and then he said, this as he came to the end of his talk. He said, all of my career, I have given to discovering God's creations, but six years ago I discovered God. He took the lavalier and he said, everything that I am or ever hope to be I owe to Jesus Christ. And you put down the lavalier and the whole assembly came to their feet in a standing ovation and if you're a scientist and had been, they don't do that. I told other science friends, they that's, I've never heard of that, and person after person kept coming up to him, saying, I'm a believer, but I've been afraid in academe and that in that kind of community to say that, and I just want you to know that you've given me the courage to step out.

It is a journey of discovery. We're discovering the God who is there, we're discovering the God who is the hound of heaven who hunts us up the days and down the years, and when that happens, when that point, when that thing happens, if you will, that's when time gets overwhelmed by eternity. And where I had a big 'D' for death in a small 'I' for life I swap it out for a small 'd' for death and a big 'L' for life, and that's how that works. This is the God who is everywhere who knows me, there's no place I can't go that he is not or where I can go, that he is not, and he is the one who calls us to himself in so many myriad ways because we're so many myriad people and he knows exactly what we need.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for your grace. Thank you for your presence. Help us, Lord, to always be open to the moving of Your Holy Spirit. Help us to be open to angels unaware. Help us to be open to signs and wonders and your grace in the shape of moments or people or the presence of your Holy Spirit. Help us to be people who sometimes are so inspired by your awesome character and by your creations we just want to shout and other times were so touched by your presence, we can hardly breathe. Sometimes we want to laugh and cry at the same time.

We want to be fully human and fully alive in you, and we are grateful that you go out of your way to make that happen. In Jesus name, Amen.