Experiencing God

**Experimentando a Dios**

February 5, 2023

Scripture reader: **Billy Walter**

**(Ephesians 1:15-23 MSG)**

That’s why, when I heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the followers of Jesus, I couldn’t stop thanking God for you—every time I prayed, I’d think of you and give thanks. But I do more than thank. I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—**to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally**, **your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do**, **grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers**, oh, **the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him**—endless energy, boundless strength! **All this energy issues from Christ:** God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but *forever*. **He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything.** At the center of all this, **Christ rules the church**. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. **The church is Christ’s body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.**

**(Ephesians 1:15-23 NLT)**

Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God’s people everywhere, **16**I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, **17**asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to **give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God**. **18**I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that **you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called**—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. I also pray that **you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him**. This is the same mighty power **20**that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. **21**Now **he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else**—not only in this world but also in the world to come. **22**God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. **23**And **the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself**.

Good morning! Welcome to Lake Erie Church and to the month of February—we are just concluding 31 days of spiritual renewal through prayer, Scripture reading, fasting and prayer. Now, **let’s keep it up**—you don’t have to have a church-wide campaign to be disciplined to pray, read the Bible and fast. It’s about a fresh hunger for God in your life and the sincere desire to be close to Him.

As your pastor, I’ve been praying and thinking about today—having just finished the five weeks on prayer—where do we go next? As I prayed, **I could not get away from the idea of what it means to EXPERIENCE GOD.**

Every week you and I gather here to worship God and we do—we stand among others, we sing, we pray, we encourage one another…but **TO EXPERIENCE GOD IS MORE!**

It’s like the difference in knowing ice cream exists and actually tasting it! God is best when He is “experienced”…but how do we do that?

Let’s start with our understanding that you and I are meticulously made with an extraordinary ability to walk and talk with God….but do we?

This passage read today in Paul’s letter to Ephesians keeps provoking me to greater understanding of what it means to “experience God?”

* **Experiencing God is like a relationship with a good friend.** A friend is someone who knows everything there is to know about you and likes you anyway. No matter how much mess you create, a good friend sticks with you until it’s better.
* **Experiencing God is like the love of a godly mother or father.** God knows us too well to be fooled by our public face. God is universally interested in my ideas, hopes and worries.  No matter how silly they seem to others.  God is both encouraging and proud, not because what I’ve managed to do is anything particularly special, but because like good parents He is totally thrilled with who I am.

So let me offer three very true statements that come out of this passage in Ephesians to further our understanding…

**We Experience God Through His Presence and Power**

**Experimentamos a Dios a través de su presencia y poder**

“I also pray **you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him**. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. Now **he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else.”**

* To experience God is to know how powerful God really is.
  + There is no power in all the world that compares with God’s power. (He is far about any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else)
  + Nothing makes God powerful: God just IS powerful – that’s His nature! After all, if God needed someone else to make Him powerful, then that person would be more powerful than God; and this is impossible, since, as we have seen, no-one is greater than God.
* It is impossible for humans to understand how powerful God is…
  + Created everything that was by a spoken word (Genesis)
  + Sustains everything in the universe (Acts 17:28)
  + Knows every person on the planet by name and numbers the hair on their head
  + Will one day throw the devil and his fallen angels into the lake of fire.
* This is God’s world and He is the most powerful of all created things.
* We see this demonstrated in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  + Think of any great, noble, powerful figure in history and not one has ever died and been raised from the dead—Jesus did.

(Philippians 3:10)

I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death,

(Filipenses 3:10)

Quiero conocer a Cristo y experimentar el gran poder que lo levantó de entre los muertos. quiero sufrir con él, partícipe de su muerte,

**We Experience God in Community With Other Believers**

**Experimentamos a Dios en comunidad con otros creyentes**

At the center of all this, **Christ rules the church**. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. **The church is Christ’s body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.**

* One of the most powerful forces on this planet (after God) is His church!
* It is God’s plan that His church (universal) is the center of divine activity in the world.
  + God’s church is not a building, it’s not a denomination—it’s universal because people from every nation, every tongue make up the church God is calling HIS CHURCH!
    - You can attend LEC but not be part of His Church
    - You can read your Bible and not be part of His church
    - Because your heart is not His
    - Your motives are not His
    - Your pursuits are not His calling

(2 Timothy 3:1-5)

that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

(2 Timoteo 3:1-5)

que en los últimos días vendrán tiempos peligrosos. Porque habrá hombres amadores de sí mismos, avaros, jactanciosos, soberbios, blasfemos, desobedientes a los padres, ingratos, impíos, sin afecto natural, implacables, calumniadores, incontinentes, feroces, despreciadores de lo bueno, traidores, impetuosos, magnánimos, amantes de los placeres más que de Dios; Teniendo apariencia de piedad, pero negando la eficacia de ella: a los tales evita.

* His church is UNSTOPPABLE.

(Matthew 16:13)

I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it

(Mateo 16:13)

Edificaré mi iglesia y las puertas del infierno no prevalecerán contra ella

* This is not a defensive word but offensive!
* There are things going on this world/in this community that might lead you to believe that sin is winning and evil has overcome—but don’t you be fooled.

(Philippians 2:10-11)

Every knee is going to bow and every tongue is going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father.

(Filipenses 2:10-11)

Toda rodilla se va a doblar y toda lengua va a confesar que Jesucristo es Señor para gloria de Dios padre.

**We Experience God Through His Will And Calling**

**Experimentamos a Dios a través de su voluntad y llamado**

I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory **to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him**

Paul says several important things here…

* The wisdom and discernment of knowing God personally
  + The very thought we can know God for ourselves
  + We don’t need someone to intervene for us, pray for us,

(Hebrews 4:16)

Let us therefore boldly to the throne of grace that we may find grace and mercy to help in time of need.

(Hebreos 4:16)

Acerquémonos, pues, confiadamente al trono de la gracia para que podamos hallar gracia y misericordia para el socorro en tiempos de necesidad.

* Clarity and focus about what God is ultimately calling you to do with your life
  + Every person on earth has a divine purpose attached to their life
  + In fact, my life will be finished (no matter how much oat bran I eat) when my work on earth is done.
* The extravagant work of God in our lives as we trust Him
  + Paul wants us to get an understanding that God has been at work in all of our life

(Philippians 1:6)

And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

(Filipenses 1:6)

Y estoy seguro de que Dios, que comenzó la buena obra dentro de vosotros, continuará su obra hasta que finalmente esté terminada en el día en que Cristo Jesús regrese.

(Proverbs 3:5-6)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,

And lean not on your own understanding;

In all your ways acknowledge Him,

And He shall direct your paths.

(Proverbios 3:5-6)

Confía en el Señor con todo tu corazón,

Y no te apoyes en tu propio entendimiento;

Reconócelo en todos tus caminos,

Y Él enderezará tus caminos.

Conclusion:

I sometimes try to imagine what Jesus was saying to the young woman (John 8) the Pharisees dragged into the courtyard and accused her of adultery—Jesus told her “I don’t condemn, go and sin no more”—but what did that really mean-what was He trying to say to her—

**I want so much more for you—go live your life in the freedom I am offering you—be who you are supposed to be—don’t settle for less, don’t give yourself to things that won’t make you mighty in God!**

If all you want is to come to church, enjoy the music, see your friends and claim this place as “your church” we are glad to accommodate you—but if you are hungry for more—if you want to walk and talk with God and experience a deeper and more meaningful experience than you presently have—THIS IS YOUR TIME!

God I’m a sinner

I'm sorry for my sins

I believe Jesus died for my sins

I believe Jesus will forgive my sins

I choose Jesus