

**Encountering the Heart of God**  
**Sermon 1: Encountering God's Heart**  
**Sermon Bible Passages Exodus 34:4-8; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16**  
**(God has a Name – chapter 1 & 2 – but this is mainly an introduction)**

We all can carry false images of God in our minds. I wonder how you see God? Maybe it's God as a childhood headmaster, watching and waiting for you to step out of line; maybe it is God as 'Father Christmas' – someone you are not quite sure exists, but you hope will bring you presents; maybe it is the 'tyrannical God you see in the Old Testament; maybe it is the image of God as a distant father who has let you down... How we perceive God determines how we perceive ourselves and how we live our lives. How can we know God's true character?

In this series we look at who God says he is in Exodus 34:6-7 and we'll be unpacking these verses over the next few weeks.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. If you really think about it, do you have a particular 'picture of God' in your mind now? Do you perceive God as being like a parent, teacher, coach, or other authority figure from your past? Does that make God good or bad in your mind? How might this picture be 'distorted' and does that affect your relationship with Him?

2. What makes you angry at or frustrates you about God? Are your emotions based on the God of the Bible or on your false perceptions? How do you know the difference?

**If possible, read Exodus 33 as background (Moses has just come down from Mt Sinai with the 10 commandments to find the people of Israel worshipping a golden calf).**

**Then read Exodus 34:1-8, focussing on v6-7.**

3. How do you feel reading God's description of himself in v6-7? Does it surprise you how he describes himself?

4. How do these characteristics that God uses help us to see him as a 'relational being' rather than an 'impersonal force' in the universe? How does this make you feel?

**Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16**

5. What does this passage say about what the Holy Spirit does?

6. What do you think it might mean by the 'deep things of God'?

7. Dan Ortlund in the book 'Gentle and Lowly' describes how the word 'understanding' (in v12) that the Spirit brings is not merely about 'head knowledge' but is about an 'experiential knowing'

He says (Gentle and Lowly p122, 125)

*'It is experiential knowing, the way you know the sun is warm when you stand with your face raised to the sky on a cloudless June day.'*

*...The Spirit **makes the Heart of God real to us**. He takes what we read in the Bible and believe about God's heart and moves it from theory to reality, from doctrine to experience...The Spirit has been given to us in order that we might know, way down deep, the endless grace of the heart of God.'*

What is the difference between knowing God *in your head* and knowing God *in your heart*? Do you feel you know God in your heart as well as your head?

## **RESPONSE**

A prayer from Augustine of Hippo (354-430) in our 'St Chad's Daily Prayer booklets' says this...

'Help me to know you, that I may truly love you,  
And so to love you that I may fully serve you.'

Reflect together on what it says, first and then say it together.

Pray for each other that through this sermon series, the Holy Spirit will reveal to you the 'deep things of God' and help you to know God better, so you can love him better.

## **DAILY RESPONSE**

Each day this week:

- Take a few minutes each day to read Exodus 34:6-7 and meditate on it. Maybe take a word each day and pray through what that says about God.
- Then pray the prayer from Augustine of Hippo above and take some time to sit in silence and just be with God and allow him to encounter you.... and see what He does...