

Sermon Series: TRANSFORMATION

Sermon: God Knows My Name

Text: Psalm 139; Isaiah 49:15-16

Discussion Questions:

- Do you struggle learning people's names - or is it something that comes fairly easy to you?
- What does it communicate to you when someone addresses you by name?
- Would you say that name learning is a skill that can be learned and developed - even for someone that isn't "naturally" good at it?
- What are some "tricks" that you've learned that have helped you to remember people's names?
- Who comes to mind when you think of a person in your life who was really good at remembering names?

Examination:

Read Exodus 3:1-15.

- Most of us are familiar with the basic storyline of these verses. It's the story of how God appeared to Moses in the form of the burning bush - and called him to be the person to confront the Pharaoh and facilitate the release of the Jews who are enslaved in Egypt. What we can miss in this story are the numerous references to names - and the importance of a person's name.
 - In verse 1, we see that Moses is tending the flock of his wife's father - a man identified here as Jethro. If you read the previous chapter (Exodus 2), this can be a bit confusing. Read Exodus 2:15-20, and discuss why this is confusing.
 - What do we see in Ex. 2:16 & 3:1 that might give us a clue as to why Reuel is also called Jethro?
 - Most scholars believe that "Jethro" (which means "His Excellence") is actually not a name - but a title. This would be similar to titles such as "Senator," or "President," or "Pastor," or "Pharaoh." What does this tell us about the respect Reuel had in his culture by being a priest?
 - It's also interesting to know that the name Reuel means "Friend of God." In what ways do you think a person's name can contribute to the kind of person they eventually become?
 - In verse 4, God calls out to Moses. Why do you think God calls his name - not once...but twice?
 - In verse 6, God refers to three more names. Why does God identify Himself by speaking of these three men by name?
 - In verse 13, Moses complains that calling God "The God of my fathers" wouldn't be adequate in the face of the Egyptian rulers. Why does Moses need to know God's NAME?
 - Discuss verse 14. What do we learn about God?
 - Discuss verse 15. What do we learn about God?

In **Isaiah 49:13-16** we read:

*Sing for joy, O heavens! Rejoice, O earth! Burst into song, O mountains!
For the Lord has comforted his people
and will have compassion on them in their suffering.
Yet Jerusalem says, "The Lord has deserted us; the Lord has forgotten us."
Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child?
Can she feel no love for the child she has borne?
But even if that were possible, I would not forget you!
See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands.
Always in my mind is a picture of Jerusalem's walls in ruins.*

- The Prophet Isaiah is looking into the future - at a time when the Israelites will be taken into captivity as a punishment for having turned away from God. They will be punished - but NOT FORSAKEN. Disciplined - but NOT FORGOTTEN.
 - How easy is it, when we are being disciplined or reprimanded in some way, to take on a "Poor Little Old Me" mindset that basically plays the victim?
 - How easy is it for us to take on this same attitude - an attitude that concludes that God doesn't really know me and doesn't really care?
- What is the answer to the question: Has God really forgotten me? (v. 15)
- What is the metaphor Isaiah uses to reinforce the impossibility of God forgetting us? (v. 15)
- What is the promise Isaiah gives to remind us all how much God loves and cares about us? (v. 16)
 - Have you ever written something down on your hand? Why did you do it?
 - How meaningful is the phrase "always on my mind..."?

Conclude by reading **Psalms 139**.

- How does this great Psalm of David reinforce the truth that God loves each one of us - cares about each one of us - and knows each one of us by name?

Application:

Meditate on the fact that when Jesus died on the cross, stretched out His arms, and the soldiers put nails through His hands, your name was engraved there. When you get to heaven, there will be no scars on anyone except Jesus. He's going to have those scars for eternity to remind us how much He loves us, to say, "Do you think I could forget you? Not a chance! This is how much you matter to me."