

CHASING GOD

Genesis 35:1-13

Title: *The REAL Big Bang, Pt 34*

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Hello, church family I am very excited to be here again sharing a message that God has put on my heart. You know I was thinking about the very first time Pastor Bruce asked me to preach. It was about 4 years ago and I remember feeling so scared. I had been giving messages to the youth for over 10 years, but I was scared of the big people.

But now I am not scared anymore, even though you are all still the big people, you are my family. I love getting to know so many of you and praying with you. You are my church family and I am very excited to share with you the message that God has given me.

Since you're my family, we need to catch up on some family photos! Most of you tell me you enjoy me sharing my life and my family photos with you. Some of you may be thinking, "Is she going to show us these grand baby photos every time she preaches?" And the answer is YES! I'm going to mix them up little bit with other things I love. OK?

So I really love cake. Doesn't this cake look so good! (Photo of Christopher with cake)

Oh and that little baby who just turned one, he loves cake too! I have the same expression when I see cake too!

And I love laughter! (Photo of Christopher laughing)

We take him out to eat with us every Friday and he just started eating mac and cheese. But when he doesn't want any more he throws them on the floor. Poppi John was being very firm with him saying "NO Christopher NO!" Christopher thought it was the funniest thing ever. He would look at

me and sneak the mac and cheese on the floor, and then laugh hysterically

How do they learn these things? Sin comes naturally to us even at 1 years old.

I love my family heirloom Easter baskets. (Photo of kids with Easter Baskets) These are our kids, Mary, Lizzie, Ashley, Daana, two Matts and Jeff . . . and of course baby Christopher!

I love graduations! (Photo of Matt)

My son-in-law Matt Lizzies Matt just graduated from Liberty University and how cool is this, just as he walked by us the person who was next to him with the hat GOD IS GOOD turned their head at the perfect time so I could get a picture of it!

And I love little cute dogs like this one, (Photo of Ashley at Memorial Day parade)

This is not our dog, but this is my daughter Ashley and she is Miss Veterans Day this year and will be competing for Miss New Jersey just few weeks in Atlantic City. Would you keep her in prayer that she would show Jesus to the girls she competes with.

And I want to shout out To Chris and Steve Smith for always driving Ashley in Steve's awesome car in parades and their little dog Chilli came along for the ride. I think Chilli got more attention than Ashley did!

So there you have it . . . my family photos. For those of you who are new, you may feel like you know little bit about me now. I am the Campus Pastor, a Mom, and a Grand mom, and they are my most favorite titles ever!

The title of my message is

“Chasing God...Seeking His Face. . . Not his Hand.”

In my last sermon we talked about Experiencing God, joining God at his work, and I know some of you have pretty cool God stories of how you joined God where ever he was working!

As I think about Experiencing God, and what that means, some of you may not be ready to just jump in and join God at his work, because you haven't been chasing God. Because sometimes we are too busy chasing everything else.

You may be thinking why do we need to chase God? Isn't he always pursuing us? The answer to that is YES HE IS!

I want you to think about this for a moment, would a relationship grow if only one person did all the pursuing?

You see, we are all chasing something, and that something is what takes up all of our time. We chase our careers, we chase success, we chase relationships, and we chase approval and affirmation from other people. We chase our dreams and we even chase blessings instead of the Blessor!

We will always come up feeling empty, because all that chasing leaves us tired. Anxiety is on the rise like never before. We feel we need to keep up, especially our young people. They see their friends on social media and feel the need to be engaged or married by a certain age or have a career by a certain age and when they don't, depression creeps in and anxiety takes over and we are all left miserable. Depression and Anxiety is taking over our lives.

We just don't feel like we are enough. But we ARE enough for GOD and isn't HE the only one who really matters?

Look at your neighbor and say "I am enough for GOD!" Now look at your other neighbor and say "That's all that matters!"

God is pursuing us. He has all the power and all the answers, but He wants us to pursue Him and chase Him. He wants us to seek His face not His hand.

When we seek his face we receive His favor and when you have the favor of God on your life, everything works out! In Gods timing! It's true!

How do I know He wants us to chase Him?

Let's look at His Word.... Please stand for the reading of God's Word.

Jeremiah 29:13

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart.”

All of your heart...

If you are seeking and chasing God with ALL of your heart you won't have time to worry about what everyone else is getting or doing.

John 4:23

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.”

Look at this... We seek God. He finds us. Do you want God's attention? Seek His face not His hand. Seek His presence, not what He can do for you.

There is a game my grandbaby loves to play. I say to him, “I'm going to get you!” He runs, but then he stops and lets me catch him, and I pick him up and love on him. This game wouldn't be any fun if I didn't catch him. He would just be running and looking back and see that no one cared enough to chase him.

God wants us to chase Him, love on him, laugh with Him, and cry with Him. God wants us to seek His face and His presence in our everyday life. Not just go to Him when we want or need something.

We are continuing our study in

Genesis Chapter 35: Jacob Returns to Bethel

We have been following the life of Jacob and it's quite a fascinating life. Right? Let's talk about Jacob for a minute. So Jacob went from ignoring God and doing whatever he wanted. He was a conniver, a liar, and a cheater. Jacob did some pretty underhanded things.

He ignored God and then we see he wrestled with God. Now in Chapter 35, He's got it all together. He is now a God Chaser! Go Jacob! Every one say "GO JACOB!" Everyone say "IT'S ABOUT TIME!"

So he went from ignoring God, to wrestling with God, to Chasing God? And I love it! How many of us have been there?

Genesis 35:1-13

Gen 35:1 "Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau"

So let's look at this verse, why didn't God just tell Jacob what he wanted to tell him at this moment? Why did God say "Go up to Bethel and settle there, build and altar there to God."

Because God wanted Jacob to seek Him, to honor Him, and to worship Him. God is Holy and He is worthy of all our time and attention. Can I get an amen?

Let's go on.

Gen 35:2-3

"So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me where ever I have gone."

So let's look at what Jacob is doing as He is Chasing God....

(Screen)

1. He is Obedient. Doing what God is telling him to do.
2. He is getting rid of IDOLS.

Do whatever God tells you to do and do it fast. Sometimes Obedience is hard and it's scary, but God is asking you and me to take the first step. It might just save someone's life. What is God telling you to do?

(Story of Don and bitterness)

Idols will keep us from God.

We can't chase idols and chase God at the same time. God will have no part in it. What are some of the idols we have today? They may not be statues we pray to but idols are the things we chase after the most and spend all our time thinking about.

(Screen)

An idol is anything you think about more than you think about GOD.

Exodus 20:3 "Thou shall have no other Gods before me."

Do you think about God every day, or only when you need something?

What are some of our idols? Our success, our dreams our relationships, that boyfriend or girlfriend, other's opinions, even our ministries can be idols. Idols can even be our addictions. If you can't get rid of them, ask God to get rid of them for you.

God is serious about Idols...

Haiti Story about Idols...

(Screen)

Isaiah 44:9

“All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind. They are ignorant to their own shame.”

Let's continue...

Gen 35:4

“So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears. And Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem.”

Jacob buried them to separate himself and his family from the sin of worshiping idols. Are we doing the same? Getting rid of idols. What is the idol in our heart? Anything we chase or think about more than God.

(Screen)

Genesis 35:5-7

“Then they set out, and the terror of God fell on the towns all around them so that no one pursued them. 6. Jacob and all the people with him came to Luz (that is Bethel) in the land of Canaan. 7. There He built an altar, and He called the place EL Bethel, because it was there that God revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother.”

Start chasing and pursuing God and God will chase the devil and demons away from you!

(Screen)

Genesis 35:9-13

“After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. God said to him, “your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob: your name will be Israel. So he named him Israel. And God said to him, I am God Almighty be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also

give to you, I will give this land to your descendants after you. Then God went up from him at the place where he had talked to him.”

Jacob didn't start out chasing God, he ignored God, and he wrestled with God. But when he started chasing God, he found Him. And when he was obedient to God, God blessed him.

(Screen)

Don't chase your dreams...Chase the God who gave you the dreams!
Seek Gods face not His hand.
Seek the Blessor not the blessing.

Seeking Gods face will bring Gods favor!

How can you do that? The first thing is to get rid of our idols. I say our idols because I am right there with you. But I want God and His presence more than anything else in my life! Do you?

I want to share a short video with you, it's a scene from the movie "One Night with the King." The story of Queen Esther. She was chosen Queen to a Persian King who didn't know she was Jewish. He was about to have all of her Jewish people killed in the kingdom. Esther must go before the king, but anyone who goes before the King without being summoned by the King himself would be killed. She was not summoned by him and was afraid to go. She was risking her life but there was a bigger purpose the salvation of the Jewish race.

We have a bigger purpose then ourselves. The Salvation of our friends and loved ones. I want you to picture yourself as Esther running for your life and the lives of those you love, giving up everything to appear before our King Jesus.

(Show Movie clip)

Did you notice the first line Esther said in the movie?

She said when David went before Golliath,

(Screen)

“David’s victory came not because he fought well, but because He believed well.”

Do you believe well? If you do, victory will come.

She ran through the rain, through the storms, and there was so much opposition against her. There were swords drawn about to take her life, but just when the last sword was drawn the king stopped it and held out the scepter to her and she fell in the arms of the king.

If you don't know the end of the story, she saved the Jewish race from being killed and she married the king and became queen.

Esther 4:14 “Perhaps you were born for such a time as this.”

Perhaps we all were born for such a time as this. To worship God in Spirit and in truth.

Sometimes we are running for our lives. It may be really hard for some of you to chase God these days. You are in a battle and you are running for your life. Run to God.

As your Campus Pastor, I’ve had the privilege of praying with you, for you and I know the pain some of you have gone through.

I am here to tell you that there were times I couldn't run towards God to chase Him. I had to crawl and fight every step of the way. But I am not ashamed to crawl to the cross! I am not ashamed to Chase a God who would go to the cross and die for me.

We may not fight well all the time, but we can believe well. We may not be able to run to the cross for victory, but we can crawl to the cross. We may not understand everything that happens, but we can trust a God who does.

We can lift each other up and pray for each other. We can go from ignoring God, and wrestling with God to chasing God . . . just like Jacob!

Can you imagine if this church was filled with God chasers?

Chasing God is an everyday thing! A few months ago I challenged you to love fearlessly. I am challenging you today to chase God above all else!

Get rid of the idols of your heart! When you go home ask God to show you what those idols are.

Chase God, read his word, spend time alone in prayer every day. Love Him and worship Him not just on Sunday. Everyday!

Make your relationship with God the best relationship you've ever had. For those of you who don't know how to do that, God is waiting for you to start today.

Its starts with a relationship with Jesus Christ Gods own Son.

It's as easy as ABC. Pray with me now"

Dear God, thank You for loving me, for chasing me, I admit I am a sinner please forgive me for all of my sins.

I believe you sent your own Son Jesus to take my place and die on the cross for my sins, past, present, and future.

Jesus I asked You to come into my heart and be my Lord and Savior. I commit my life to You. Holy Spirit help me to live for Jesus and chase God every day. Amen!