

PREPARING OUR HEARTS

20 **Lent** 26

WEEK ONE:
GOD'S CHARACTER

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.” - Exodus 34:6-7

As God reveals the ten commandments to Moses, he also reveals his own character. The Lord our God is vast and varied in nature. He is merciful, kind, slow to anger, loving, faithful, perfectly forgiving and yet uncompromisingly just.

To cultivate a desire of knowing God as he is revealed in the Scriptures is to expose ourselves to the humbling reality that we are not God. Our ideas of mercy are finite. Our standards of justice are limited and skewed. We are often quick to anger rather than slow, and our love for those who have nothing to offer us pales in comparison to his.

Though God is beyond our comprehension, he invites us to know him. Only through sitting at his feet and seeking him can we begin to know him, and only in knowing him can we begin to truly understand love, mercy, justice, and forgiveness.

It is likely that each of us struggle with aspects of God's character. Maybe friendship with God comes naturally to us, but viewing Him as master and Lord feels harsh or uncomfortable. We may agree with God's judgment on sins we find vile, yet struggle to accept his mercy when similar sins are forgiven by the blood of Jesus.

Understanding the diversity of God's character gives us incredible insight into the gospel. We discover that we are guilty. We deserve the wrath of a perfectly just God. And yet, Jesus came with pure forgiveness on display, being crushed and struck down for our sin. He came with mercy for those who have sinned, and love for the lost sheep of this world.

Re-read Exodus 34:6-7 slowly and spend a few minutes dwelling on the depth and breadth of God's character. Let his glory draw you closer, even in ways that challenge your comfort.