



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor
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GENESIS 8-9

Series: Understanding Your Roots

[PRAYER] I want to pray for Cathy now, Marjorie's sister. Pray for Marjorie as she's ministering to her in the hospital today again. I'm grateful, Lord, that she's out of ICU. I pray that you'd bring her to health and I pray that you'd demonstrate your power in her and provide your wisdom and strength to her and a peace really in the midst of her challenge that she's experiencing. Lord, I want to pray for Charlie right now who is probably sleeping, as Debra mentioned online. I know that he's struggling with his cancer and doesn't have long to live. So we're asking for strength for him and peace as well. That you'd be working in his heart and in his body. Encourage him today and bless him. Bless Debra as she's caring for him as well. I thank you that she could join us online and experience your grace through the teaching today. Now Lord, we're going to open your word. We ask that you would teach us through your word and give us some practical truths that we can understand. Lord, this very common story, one of probably the most common Bible stories is this one about Noah. I pray that you'd make it come alive in a special way for us today. We ask this in your name, amen.

Have you ever thought about Noah and recognized that God gave a lot of instructions to Noah about how to get into the ark, about all the things to do about getting into the ark. But He doesn't give him a lot of instructions coming off the ark. In fact there's this bird thing going on where Noah's sending out the birds as if Noah's trying to figure this out for himself. It leads me to this conclusion about God speaking to us that we need today. That we need to be able to position ourselves well to hear from God. And that one idea (position yourself well to hear from God) is one of the three truths that we're going to look at today. Three truths that I think you'll find helpful today as we're going through this.

The first one is you want to position yourself well to hear God speak. We're going to talk about that. It's just this story of this observation I just made now about Noah's life. But I'm just giving you a preview of where we're going. Because a second one that we're going to look at is when you start over, you want to build an altar. Remember, he's coming off the ark. He's starting all over and he's building an altar. I would just think that's a great principle for all of us. When you start over in your life, you want to build an altar.

Now let's go to one more principle we're going to look at today as we delve into this passage. Always remember and rely on the promises of God. That comes from the rainbow and the story of the promises that take place. You know the story. I'm just taking these three principles, these three life truths that we can apply to our lives from this story.

What I want to do first is I want to look at this first one that we need to position ourselves well to hear from God. In order to do that I want to read God's word. We're going to pick this up in Genesis 8. So if you have your Bible open it to Genesis 8. If you have one of the workbooks then you can just jot down in the notes some of the things you're going to learn there. I want to take you through and read this passage to you so you can see what God is saying. From this we're going to first look at this principle of what we see from the bird thing that Noah is doing and how God speaks to us. Position yourself well to hear from the Lord. Let me read this to you.

It says – But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated. So in our last chapter 150 days that the water was over the earth. Then there was another 150 days that the water has abated. And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month (these specific dates are there for you to actually do the calculations if you'd like), the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. We don't know exactly where that is. We believe that's in Turkey somewhere. And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. At the end of forty days (so now we have another forty days) Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.

We'll talk about the other birds in a minute, but I think that a lot of people have questions about this idea about how God speaks to us. Don't we all wish that God would just speak like He did to Noah? "Get in the boat, Noah. I'm shutting the door." When we hear from God and He speaks that way, it's clear. We like it. We go, "Yes, I know what God just said to me." It makes sense.

One man wrote this to me and he said this is an example of God spoke to him clearly. You can see how this took place in his life. He says, "Prayer has become a staple in my morning routine. More than 'please keep me safe while drive.' It's turned into open conversation with God about my heart, my struggle with depression, my kids' emotions, my wife's current struggle with life. I'm struggling with this constant question is divorce the answer. This morning after all of those questions, I said what would Jesus do? I know that's very cliché to say. When I broke it down and asked that question for each situation in life, the answer was so simple it made me smile. He had an answer for it all. So I've decided to get the separation paperwork and not sign them. I feel like I'm the master of my relationship when I ask the question what would Jesus do. He would continue to love and forgive. Now I won't live the rest of my life like that. But in the present moment I feel like that's the best choice." So obviously he's wrestling with something very significant in his life and he feels like God spoke to him. Spoke to him when? He positioned himself. What was he doing in that story? He was praying. He turned his routine prayer life ("Lord, keep me safe while I'm driving today") into this communication with God. And in the midst of that God spoke to him in a very powerful way.

See I believe that Noah is positioning himself well to hear God speak. He's trying to figure out what do we do? He's on this boat saying okay, I've been on this boat for a year now. What should I do? So he decides okay, I better send out a bird here and see what's going on out there. So he sends out a raven. And it says about the raven – *It went to and fro until the waters were*

dried up from the earth. So this raven goes out, but doesn't come back. It just keeps flying back and forth.

Now a raven is the kind of a bird that eats dead things. So he's going out there and the water has been on the earth for a year now, so there's no dead things. At least 300 days. There's no dead things out there for him, but he's flying back and forth there and he doesn't come back. So I can imagine Noah saying, "Okay. Well, that didn't work too well. I'm going to have to try something different. I'm going to try a different bird. I like the bird idea. That seems like a good thing to do. I'm going to send out a dove." Now a dove looks for living things, looks for life. Let's read on and see what it says to him.

It says in verse 8 – *Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him.* So he puts the bird out there and this was like a way for him to test the waters, so to speak. We use that phrase 'test the waters.' He's testing the waters. Are they out there. Well the bird goes out and flies around and comes back. No place to go. So he says okay and *he waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf.* So he's gaining some information. He's out there trying to figure things out, trying to understand what's happening and he gains some information that it's getting closer. I can imagine that's what he's saying. "This is a good idea," he's saying to himself, "but we're not at the right time yet."

It says – *So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth.* Verse 12 says – *Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.* So he's gathering this information about what's going on as he's trying to hear from God. Now God is going to actually speak to him in the next verses. But do you see what he's doing here? He's positioning himself well so he's ready to hear from God.

Does God speak to you? I love asking that question to young people. Between the ages of ten and eighteen I'll say, "Does God speak to you?" The normal answer I receive is no. You know why they say that? Because they're waiting for an audible voice. No, God doesn't speak to me.

I was working with one young man about ten years old. In my office his parents are watching while I'm working with him because he's got some challenges. I first met with his parents alone and I said, "How is it going this week? Better, worse, or the same?" The parents said well it's about the same. Well that's not good news for me because I like to see progress as I'm working with someone. I said, "Okay. Well, let's bring him in."

So he comes in and sits on my couch and I said to him, "How's it going? Is it better, worse, or the same?"

And he says, "The same."

I said, "It's the same? What are you working on?"

"Well I'm being disrespectful to my parents and mean to my brother."

I said, "Okay. Well you know what you're supposed to be working on, but you're telling me it's the same. Are you a Christian?"

He looks at me funny, like why would you ask me that question in the midst of this problem that I'm dealing with. He says, "Yeah, I'm a Christian."

I said, "Does God speak to you?"

He says, "No."

I said, "Would you like to hear God speak to you?"

He says, "Yeah."

I said, "Here. Take my iPad." I handed him my iPad. "Open up the Bible on the iPad and I want you to open it up to Philippians 2:3-4 and read it. Out loud read it."

He reads it this way. *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

"Okay. What is God saying in those verses?"

His response was, "I don't know."

I said, "Here. Give me the Bible. Watch. God's going to speak to me right now. Let me read the verses again. *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

You know as I ponder that verse from God's word, I'm reminded about the fact that my wife has an event going on this weekend and I need to be thinking about her and being concerned about her in the midst of this. And that part that says value others above yourselves? I need to value you as more important than me. You're a King's kid and the way I treat you is really important. I need to treat you with value. Here you try." I gave him back the iPad. "Read the verses."

He read the verses again out loud. *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

I said, "So what is that saying to you?"

He said, "Well I think God wants me to share my video game with my brother."

I said, "Did you hear it? God just spoke to you."

"Now there's another really important question," I said to him. "I ask the question do you want to hear God speak. Great question. But another question you need to have is this. If God speaks to you, will you listen? Very important question. You see if you listen to the Lord every week and you're coming to the Lord, God is going to speak to you and He's going to tell you things like share your video game with your brother, be respectful to your parents. And He's going to remind you of those so when you come back next week and I ask you the question are things better, worse, or the same, you're going to say they are better. Because you're hearing God speak. God wants to empower you. He wants to speak to you. He wants to do these things."

See I would suggest God wants to speak to each one of us and He wants to empower us with His word, the message that He has for us in our lives. God wants to do that in our lives. But you have to realize if you come to me and you say, "I would love to hear God speak," then I would say this to you: "Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?" The reason I ask that question is because if you want to hear God speak, that's the message He's going to share with you first. That you need to ask Christ into your life, you need to turn your life over to God. If you

want to hear Him speak and guide you, you need to be one of His children. So you accept Him as your Lord and Savior. That's number one. He's speaking to you. That's what He's saying.

If you're already a Christian I think the second question I might ask is, "Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?" See, the Bible tells us to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. Every day when we get up we need to say, "Lord, fill me with your Spirit today." Because the Bible talks about walking in step with the Spirit.

Do you remember in Noah's life there are three things that positioned him well to hear from God. One is that he was righteous. Secondly, he was blameless. That is he had integrity with other people. And thirdly, he walked with God. When you have the Holy Spirit working and you've turned yourself over to the Holy Spirit, you walk in step with the Holy Spirit so you position yourself well to hear the voice of God so that He can speak to you. But still there may be a blockage in your life where you can't hear the Holy Spirit or you can't hear God speak to you and that might be because you have sin in your life. Because you say, "God, speak to me," and He says okay, and right away you think, oh man, I'm doing that or I need to get rid of that problem or I need to ask forgiveness there. God says, "Hey, here's a sin you need to deal with in your life." If you want to see God work in your life, you need to deal with the issues that He's already pointing out to you. Once you deal with that, you're becoming more clearly in tune to what God wants to do in your life. He speaks to you and guides you each day to know what you do in your difficult situation, in your moment right now.

In fact look at this verse that comes from Psalm 66:16-19. Caleb mentioned this on Wednesday night, so I wanted to read it to you. It's a great verse that reminds us of this idea of sin in our hearts. He says this is a song in the Psalms. It's a song and part of the song I'm just pulling this part out. This is what it says. *Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer.* God wants to speak to us. Noah is putting out these birds there. He's getting himself ready. He's listening. He wants to know what God has for him. And so he's doing these things. There's this human element that he's doing.

You know I regularly talk to Tim Brown. I just talked to him yesterday. But he recently got a job. He left us three months ago it seems and he's been looking for a job for some time now. Well he got a job a couple weeks ago and he wanted to call me up and tell me about it. He says that he put out probably about over one hundred applications. I mean this guy is a really qualified guy. This guy is an engineer. Anybody who gets hold of him is going to be blessed. Their company is going to be blessed because he's present in it. He's an amazing guy. He put out more than one hundred applications online and in person, got those out there, but none of those panned out. Somehow there was this woman that in the course of things he came across and this woman says, "I think you should apply for that job there." So he did and that became the job for him. He's rejoicing now because God provided a job for him. But it wasn't in all of those things that he found. But I'm sure that putting himself out there and putting out those hundred applications is what positioned himself well so when this one came up he was ready to hear from God. That God provided this.

I just want to suggest that sometimes we've got to send out the birds. We've got to do what we've got to do. We can't just sit back and say, "Okay, God. Provide me with a job." Sometimes we got to get out there and do our part. We've got to do what we need to do or start living our lives the way God wants us to live and be listening so God can do that.

Now let me take you now to the passage where God speaks and listen to how God steps into this picture. So we do a little review here back in verse 13. It says – *In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. Then God said to Noah...* Here He is. He's speaking. God speaks to him right in the middle of this whole thing. He's doing all this bird thing, but it's really God is going to speak in the midst of that. That's what I think is so cool. "*Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.*" So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. *Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.* Now isn't that interesting. They come on two by twos, but they left three by threes. They're coming out by families now.

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord. Oh! We're getting into this next principle that I think is very important for us about the altar. But remember the first principle – position yourself well so you can hear from the Lord. The second life truth here is this one about the altar and how Noah is going to start all over.

So let's go back into the ark for a moment and let's imagine Noah sitting there, doing his work. Not just sitting there, but he has to take care of all these animals and take the feed and take them to all the animals and make sure everything is going okay. But during that time, I'm sure he's thinking I wonder what it's going to be like when we get off this ark. He's realizing that he's going to have to build a house. He's going to have to have a different kind of ark. He's building an ark for 120 years. He's going to be doing something different now when he gets off the ark. Where is he going to live? How close should he live to Shem and Ham and Japheth? He's been with them pretty close for the last year. Maybe he wants to be a little bit social distanced from them when they get off the ark. I don't know. Where are they going to put their houses? I'm sure he's imagining all.

In fact when I imagine the things I've got to do, I start creating a to-do list in my brain. My brain can usually hold three or four things. So if you tell me three or four things I can remember those things. But when you give me number five I forget the first four. So I have to write them all down. I can imagine Noah having this huge to-do list of what he's going to do when he gets off the ark. Here's a man who's starting all over. All the things he had before are gone. He's starting his whole life over again. I imagine he's got a lot of things on his mind about what he's going to do. But what does he do first? And that's what takes us to this principle. When you start over be sure to build an altar first.

Look at verse 20. It says – *Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.”* That’s a reference to the sin nature that we have in our lives. A propensity towards sin. A magnet that pulls us. Even from when we’re young. So that’s why we need so much of the Holy Spirit to help us overcome that in our lives.

Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains... Watch these verses. Do you see that there? *Seedtime and harvest.* There’s a cycle going on and the cycle is going to continue in your life and my life. There’s seedtime where you plant and there’s where you harvest. There’s *cold and heat.* Sometimes we have heat and sometimes we have cold. It’s a cycle that goes on. *Summer and winter.* There’s a starting over that takes place regularly in our lives. We’ve got summer and then we’ve got winter and then we start over again in the seasons. *Day and night.* The cycle that we have of starting over is even a daily cycle. They *shall not cease.* And the beautiful thing that God says is *my mercies are new every morning.*

When someone tells me they had a terrible day, “It was just a terrible day today. I yelled at my kids, my kids yelled at me,” I say, “Tomorrow is a new day. Tomorrow you get to start over.” What’s the principle? When you get to start over, you start not with your to-do list, you start with the altar. You start and build that altar. You come before God and you say, “God, I just want to acknowledge you that you are the first thing in my life. I want to serve you today. I want to dedicate myself to you today. I want to thank you for all that you’ve done and I want to give myself to all that’s yet to come. I am committed to you, Lord. I want to build this altar as a statement of my love for you and my commitment to you.” So Noah is doing that. Great principle.

I just want you to know, wherever you are in your life, tomorrow is a new day. Today is a new day. And maybe right now this morning when you say, “Lord, I want to dedicate myself to you today,” it’s the beginning of something new. God wants to do beautiful things in our lives and that’s what he’s describing there for Noah in that passage.

Well there's a third life principle that has to do with the rainbow, so we better go on and read it in the next chapter. Genesis 9:1 – *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”* So at first they’re not meat eaters. Everything is a protected species at this point. We’re going to develop all of the animals. We’ve got to let them grow. So we’re not going to eat animals at first. Now they’re going to eat animals later, but not right now. God set it up for them.

Next we come to this statement about killing. Now he’s saying by the way I’m talking to you about blood and life is in the blood. If somebody kills somebody then their life is to be taken.

Capital punishment is right here taught in this passage. Let's go back to verse 5. *And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image."* It's just this statement of the value of human life described right here in Genesis. That life is very important. We don't take it for granted.

Verse 7 – *"And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it." Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."*

Continuing on in verse 12 it says – *And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow (that's the rainbow) in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth (that is when a storm comes into your life) and the bow is seen in the clouds (and you see those little reminders of who God is), I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."*

One guy told me he got a new job recently and he found out that there were Christians at this place where he worked. He found Christians there. For him it was like a rainbow. The statement about God protecting him. Yes, I am here in this place.

It's interesting that rainbows come around storms, don't they? Either in the middle of a storm or at the end of a storm you have a rainbow. It's a reminder of God's promise so that every time you and I see a rainbow, we look at that rainbow and we say, "Thank you, God, for the promises that you've shared with me." What promises are those?

I googled "how many promises are in the Bible" this week. I found this guy named Everett Storm who has done a study of all the promises in the Bible. It took him a year and a half to go through the whole Bible and find out how many promises there are. He listed promises of God to man. That's the one I'm going to talk about, the ones God to man. But he also mentioned promises man to man, man to God. But just the ones from God to man there are 7,487 promises that God has made to us. That is a lot of promises. It makes you want to go and read it, doesn't it? It makes you want to go and open the Bible to look at the promises that God has made. You don't need 7,487. You just need one for today. As you're reading the word and you see the promises of God shared there and you go, "Yes, this is what I need today." Always remember and rely on the promises of God. That's the third principle here.

Now I want to finish this chapter. In order to do it we have to get into some dark material here. We're going to look at a sin. A sin that took place in Noah's family. I want you to see this because one of the great things about scripture is it doesn't just make all the heroes perfect. It reveals their blemishes and the challenges that they face. What that does for us is it helps us recognize that we too can be used of God. If God can use that person He can use us too. And God wants to use us even in the midst of our weaknesses and the challenges that we experience.

Well let's read the story. We don't know a lot about this. We know some. Let's read about what it says. In verse 18 it says – *The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.)* Now that's going to be important because somehow Ham and Canaan are involved in this sin. It says – *These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.*

Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine... Interesting statement. Awoke from his wine means...well, you know what that means. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."

After the flood Noah lived 350 years. All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died. We don't know what the sin was and it's something to do with nakedness and shameful. It could have been some sexual thing that transpired or it could have simply been that Ham went in there and laughed at his father, disrespected him, came out and told his brothers. We don't know exactly what it was. But here's what we do know. The sin took place when Noah got drunk. Now in all fairness to Noah, it could have been that there had never been fermented grapes before. Remember everything was in this canopy under the earth. After the flood is over things changed in our world in the atmosphere and people don't live as long. So something happens with longevity. People die sooner. Maybe that affected grapes. Maybe they ferment earlier. I don't know exactly what happened. So maybe Noah didn't realize what was going on. But I would suggest that when a person gets drunk they don't realize what's going on and they end up finding themselves often in a compromising situation.

The Bible doesn't prohibit alcohol, but certainly it's dangerous because it moves to drunkenness, which is certainly something that is not appropriate and is prohibited in scripture. It's sinful to get drunk. We don't give control over ourselves to something like alcohol. It's dangerous. So in the midst of that, Noah found himself in a compromising position. I would just say to you be careful with alcohol because when you get drunk you can find yourself in some place you didn't expect to be. You can find yourself sinning in a way you never would have when you were sober. It's a dangerous place to be. I just want to point that out from that passage as we continue on in this story in Genesis 9.

One concluding thought. If you go back to Genesis 8, the first four words struck me. I want to conclude with the first four words which are – *But God remembered Noah*. But God remembered Noah. Now what that doesn't mean is that God was so preoccupied with the other things going on that He forgot about this guy on the boat floating around over there. That's not what it means. It's a way of looking at God from a human perspective and saying God now takes active interest in Noah's life. From a human perspective. Now from God's perspective He's always concerned in Noah's life. He's concerned about the details. He knows what's going on. He never forgets anything. But from a human perspective, as Moses is writing this he's saying Noah was remembered by God. In other words God began to act in Noah's life.

I would suggest that sometimes you might feel as if God has forgotten you. I want you to know He never forgets you. He's actively involved in your life, but sometimes you don't realize it. There's a way for you to position yourself well so that you can actively see God work in your life. I would suggest it's in these three truths that we looked at today. One – position yourself well to hear God speak. Number two – when you start over, build an altar. And number three – always remember and rely on the promises of God. As you do those things you will experience God actively working in your life. He is already doing a lot of those things, but from a human perspective we don't see it sometimes. So from a human perspective it says – *But God remembered Noah*. I want to suggest from a human perspective you can experience more of God by accomplishing these three truths and keeping these life truths in mind in your own situation in your life.

Would you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, we thank you for your word and the power that it has to change us and to teach us. Lord, we are weak. We are challenged in our lives. That just humbles us in a way that makes us want to love you more and serve you more and get to know you more. So I pray that you'd prompt us today to give ourselves fully over to you. Lord, we dedicate ourselves to you. For those who might be listening to this who haven't accepted you as their Lord and Savior, we pray that you would make yourself very real to them as they pray and ask you to forgive them of their sins and draw close to you and ask you to run their lives. Lord, we thank you for the evidence that you've given to us in our hearts and our lives because of who you are and what you've done. Lord, as we worship again and sing, we ask that you would draw our hearts closer to you in that dedication. Reveal anything that we need to change or address in our lives. We want to be sensitive to you as you speak to us even through worship now. In Jesus' name, amen.