

We serve a great God. We serve a God that is called many, many different things. We serve a God with many different names. We have different names for this God that we serve. And I want you to take a minute to think about all the different names that we call God Jehovah Wonderful Counselor, Almighty, Father, Creator, Jesus, Emmanuel, holy one. I'll give you a second here to think of other names, because there are many other names that we call God. Now raise your hand if you thought of God's name as jealous. No. Maybe not. Probably not.

Maybe online people. All right. So Exodus 20, 3, 14 says for you shall worship no other God because the Lord whose name is jealous is a jealous God. God's name is jealous. Now, a little background, a little context to this verse.

Moses is dead is given two tablets, right? Two tablets with guidelines to help God's people stay in love with God and also live peacefully in a community together. And the first time Moses comes down the mountains with these two tablets, he comes down and he finds his brother.

And the people had built a golden calf. They were worshiping another God. And Moses saw what was happening and Moses became angry and he threw down the tablets, breaking them into pieces. So the God of second chances, actually, the God of second and third and fourth and fifth chances, they did not give up on the people.

And so God had Moses prepare two more tablets, just like the first two. And God sent Moses back up to the mountain and instructed Moses that God's people were only to be devoted to him. Right. He says this over and over again in Scripture.

Now, God gave these guidelines to the people of Israel because He loved them. This is why we set boundaries for our children. We want them to be safe and well. And so we set these parameters around there. We set rules for our kids.

We don't let them eat candy all day, every day. We don't let them jump from the second story, banister down to the first floor. Right. We don't let them do that. Now, our kids don't always follow our rules.

Right? They do what they want to do. And sometimes they don't think about the consequences. So when we wander from God, which we do, we go on our own way. We decide what is right and wrong for ourselves, and God longs for us to return.

And God's people return, right? We read it. We find in Scripture over and over again the cycle that people return to God and then God, then they stray. And right. It's kind of this cycle that happens over and over again.

But in this story, in this Scripture passage, God wants Moses to know that not only does God have these rules and guidelines, but the for the people, but that he is a jealous God. Now, generally, when we think of jealousy or jealousy, we think that is a bad thing.

We call jealousy the green eyed monster. We think of jealous boyfriends or jealous girlfriends. Jealousy can sometimes stem from insecurities, and it can lead to envy or gossip or bullying. Jealousy can even lead to anxiety and anger. Now, most of us probably know that that girl who was jealous and she dug her keys into the side of her boyfriend's pretty little souped up four wheel drive and carved her name into his leather seats. Right. So sometimes we think about that, right? We think about those situations

when we think of jealousy. Now, from what is called the Love chapter, it says that love is not being envious.

First Corinthians 13 four says Love is patient. Love is kind. It isn't jealous. It doesn't brag. It isn't arrogant. But being jealous is not always bad. Now I want you to think about the last time you were jealous.

Being jealous means having feelings for someone. It's that we care enough about someone that we value a coveted relationship with them. So jealousy turns into a sin when we long for something that does not belong to us. So the jealousy of God demands exclusive devotion.

God wants a committed relationship with us. We belong to God. God is our Creator and Redeemer and sustainer, and God deserves our attention. Now God is jealous, not of us, but God is jealous for us. And that's a really good thing.

It shows that God cares deeply for us and that God longs to have a relationship with us. So when we worship other things, God becomes jealous. Again, it said For you shall worship no other God. Now sometimes we get stuck on this, this word God, right?

And you know, I'll say, Well, of course I don't worship any other God, right? I only worship Jesus Christ the one true God. Right? I, I can say that. But what we get stuck on that word God, and it has a lowercase g and that lowercase g really can mean anything can be in that category.

Like any time we put something before God, we are worshiping another God. Now referring to God as a jealous God is a good thing. And it's also a really good reminder for us to draw us back to God right when we when we turn away, when we worship the golden calves in our lives, right?

Whatever that may mean, money, sports teams, alcohol, shopping, or whatever it is that we put before God. Last week, we talked about the honor of God. And so there's these questions that still kind of linger right when we think about how awesome our God is.

And I think questions like, well, if the world is so big, if the universe is so massive, if God's creation is so enormous, if I am merely a drop in the vast ocean, why would God have time for me?

Why would God care about me and my problems? And what does it really matter what I do with my time if I'm just that small in God's creation? Well over and over again in Scripture, the message is God cares and that God does have time for His creation.

God is not bound by human standards, right? When we try to figure it out in our in our own minds. How can this God of this great universe care about me? God is not human. God is God. And God is capable.

So in this message series on anxiety, we've talked about knowing the truth of Jesus. We've talked about standing in fear or in awe of God's goodness. But a third step in controlling our anxieties is knowing that the God of the universe cares for you.

God cares for you. Now. God cares when we are feeling anxious about life. And when we know that, when we can understand that God cares for us, then what do we do about that? Then we. We share with him how we are feeling.

God has time for you and He will help you carry your burdens. So sometimes we say, Well, I don't want to be a bother. Right. I don't want to be a bother. My problems are not as big as someone else's problems.

And we're we kind of get this Eeyore complex, you know, Eeyore from Winnie the Pooh. And it's like, well, I pray, but I just don't know how to pray. And God probably doesn't have time for me anyway. Right.

But it's not it's not like that. It's not it's not like this either. It's not like the movie Bruce Almighty, where God played by Morgan Freeman, of course, goes on vacation and he leaves a reporter played by Jim Carrey to function as God after he complains that God is not doing his job.

So Jim Carrey's character is in the role of God, and he realizes that he is responsible for answering prayers and the prayers start come flooding in and soon. Jim Carrey's character is surrounded by prayers and request for God.

But because he is not actually God, he does not have enough compassion to answer every single prayer. So he just says yes to everyone's prayers. And as you can imagine, it didn't turn out great. A human cannot care for others in the same way that God can.

God's jealousy is not at the same level as we think about human jealousy. So again, if God cares, if God really cares about us, how do we what do we do about it? How do we communicate with God?

Communication is really important. Right. We all know this. Marriages fail for many reasons, infidelity or addiction, stress about money, differences in values or morals. But. But there is a thread that usually is through all of these, and that is a lack of communication.

I know Tom and I have been married. We'll be married 23 years next month. And it took us most of those years to really learn how to effectively communicate with each other. But we never stopped trying, because if there is no communication, there is no relationship.

If we are not communicating with God, we do not have a relationship with God. So how do we communicate with God? Of course, there's a lot of different ways we can communicate with God. And we call these ways prayer, right?

We go to God in prayer. And prayer is simply a conversation. And there's a lot of ways to think about having a conversation with God. And we think about these ways of praying. And sometimes prayer can be intimidating.

But Jesus teaches us in in the Sermon on the Mount Psalm about what it's like to communicate with God and what we should do. So this is Matthew seven verses seven through 11 and it says ask and it will be given to you search and you will find knock and the door will be opened for you.

For everyone who asks, receives and everyone who searches find and for everyone who knocks the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asked for bread, would you give a stone? Or if the child asked for a fish, would you give a snake?

If you then who are evil, know how to give your good gifts to your children. How much more will your father in Heaven give good gifts? Give good things to those who ask him. Ask, search and knock. These things that are Jesus are telling us to do.

These are these are action words. These are things that we should be doing. If we want to get God's attention and knowing that God wants our attention. So we ask, God already knows what we want before we ask it.

God knows our hearts. He knows what's on our minds. But being bold in asking for what we want is pleasing to God. I was just talking to someone the other day about how some people are so brave in asking for a raise in their jobs and others feel a little bit more intimidated by it.

Now, asking for a raise is a bold thing to do, but it clearly communicates a need or a desire. Now, for those who hesitate to ask for a raise, might think that they are not worthy enough.

Or they don't want to be a burden on anyone. But ask God for what you need because you are not a burden on God. You are worthy. God knows what you need, but he wants to be asked. Now search.

Sometimes it takes some time to find God. Sometimes we just don't feel the presence of God. I don't feel the presence of the Holy Spirit sometimes will say, I don't. I think God seems so far away, we think at times.

But yet sometimes it's just that we're not taking time to search for God. Now we have a dog and he's a little dog and he is blind and he's deaf. And we had a friend come over and she brought her dog with.

And even though he was just sitting right by the door, it took a few minutes for our dog to even realize that there was a new human and dog in his house. But once he got a whiff of it, he started searching, right?

He knew there was something around. And so the guest dog was really annoyed when Goomba that's our dog, when Goomba found him and he was really annoyed. And so he would get up and he would move and then Goomba would search all over and he would just search the whole house.

It was kind of like this game of hide and seek. And so the dog, our guest dog, he got smart, right? He was smart. And he watched Goomba go all over the house sniffing around. And then when Goomba would get kind of close to him, he would just get up and move before Goomba could find him. Now, Goomba did not ever give up, right? He searched the entire time that this guest dog was there. And so, like Goomba, we should also not ever try to give. We should never give up, right? Even if we feel like we're terrible at seeking, we should not give up.

But. But God is not moving. God is not getting up when we get close and trying to, you know, trying to trick us, even though sometimes it feels like that. And actually, it's the opposite. God is actually chasing us.

But sometimes we just don't take time to turn around and face him. So we do the work that Jesus is calling us to do by searching for God. And the last thing Jesus is telling us to do is to not announce our presence to God.

God is with us always. But He wants to know when we are present with him. He wants to be acknowledged. He wants to be worshiped. When we take time from our our busy lives and show up to worship, that is pleasing to God.

And God opens the door for us, even if we've been away for a really, really long time, no matter what we've done. When we show up, God welcomes us home because God is a safe place. Communicating with God through prayer is important.

It's a key part of fighting our anxiety. Now there are different ways to communicate. Sometimes it's out loud and sometimes it's silently. Sometimes it's through song or dance or music or art. Sometimes it's formal. And other times it's as if we're talking to our best friend who knows all of our deepest, darkest secrets and still loves us anyway. And sometimes it's praying for ourselves. And sometimes it's praying for others. Philippians four, six and seven says, do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with Thanksgiving. Let your request be made known to God and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus

Christ. It doesn't matter how you pray or speak or communicate with God. It matters that you stay connected to God. He is jealous for you. He longs to have an intimate relationship with his creation, created in his own image.

So we take comfort in knowing that we serve a jealous God, a God, that God seeks our attention because God cares for us. God wants us to tell him how we feel. You. You are God's work of art and your life matters in God's eyes.

You are important. You are precious and valuable. Let your needs. Be made known to God because God is jealous for you. Would you join me in prayer? Gracious and holy and loving God. A God of many names. God, you are jealous for us.

And that feels weird too, to say that. But God saying that means that you care for us, you care for our desires, you care about our wants, you care about our needs. You care when we are feeling anxious.

You care for us. And so we thank you today. We God we thank you for that. We thank you for the opportunity and God, we need you. We need your help. And being bold to asking for what we need.

We need your help. And in searching for you, God turning around and facing you. We know that. God, when we knock on the door, you will open it up for us. No matter where we've been or how far we strayed or what we have done.

You just welcome us home. We serve an awesome God. God, you are an awesome God. We say all of this in Jesus name. Amen.