

Exod 04-10-17a

We'll continue our worship this morning by taking a moment at the beginning of the Bible study portion to examine our souls and ensure that we are in a position to receive the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, receive the imparted Word, whatever the deficiencies of the conduit through which it comes. The great thing about the Christian life and about God's provision for us is that with the power of God's Word and the presence of God's Spirit, those are the essentials. And you find the Word of God in many forms.

You can obtain it from many sources, but as we saw in 1 John on Friday night, God says you have no need that any man teach you in the sense of being told what is right and what is wrong or what to believe because we have the Holy Spirit to minister God's Word to our hearts, to give us a confirmation of not only our salvation but also that we are being fed and nourished up. We know whether we are receiving truth because of its effect, because of its fruit. And when our soul is starved for the Word of God and we are powerless and we are comfortless and in some cases clueless, if we love God and if we care about our spiritual health, we look for where we can find the teaching of the Word of God.

And in its first and best source it will be in a local assembly where we can gather with believers of like mind, forsake not the assembling of ourselves together. And one of the reasons is with modern day and modern technology people think, well why can't I just listen to something on the radio or on TV or over the Internet or get a tape from my favorite pastor and just do that and not even go to church. And unfortunately in some of the strong teaching tradition churches that many of us come out of, that sounds like a good plan and many people have actually followed that or even listened via what they call FX, which is basically getting a phone and a speaker and having the service piped over the phone.

And that's great, but many of us have had to do that in one form or another. When I was in the service I subsisted on tapes for years and was perfectly fine. But ideally, ideally, there are at least two or three that are gathered together, not a lone ranger.

Did you know the Boy Scouts have a program? If you live in the wilds of Montana or someplace and there's not a scout troop, you can still be a Boy Scout. It's kind of like Boy Scout by correspondence. They call it the Lone Wolf Scout program.

I looked into it because there was no troop when I lived up in Rogers County, Oklahoma. But I thought, well, maybe not. And one of the reasons is the whole concept of scouting is that you learn teamwork and you do things as a group.

The same thing is true, the Bible says, forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is. You may just assemble as a family and that's great. As long as there are two or three gathered together, Jesus says, in my name, there am I in the midst.

And that's what counts. We have families that assemble and study via tape and that's great. Just

don't think that going it alone for an extended period of time is the will of God because it's not.

And the reason, this is my whole point, the reason is our fellowship, our koinonia, our participation in the plan of God and all of its benefits is a group thing. It is not just the teacher of the Word of God that counts. It is the spiritual gift that God gives to each one.

The presence of each one is valuable. You may think, well, I don't think I really perform a ministry. I just kind of show up and I may or may not say something.

I may or may not suggest to him or offer a thought or ask a question or talk to anybody. I may have a quiet day. It doesn't matter.

The presence of God's Holy Spirit, when we are susceptible to His influence and His ministry, is going to work in us and through us. And you never know, it may just be the smile that you flash at someone while you're there. It may just be the fact that you showed up that is an encouragement to someone.

It may be an offhand remark that you don't even remember making that makes a profound difference. It can be the hymn that you suggest or the scripture that comes to your mind that you mentioned on the break or after class or the point that comes to your mind as the seeds of the Word of God strike the fertile soil of our souls. And that is a synergy that is divine in its nature.

And it's important that we be together. It's important that we assemble. It's important that we be with other believers of like mind so that God can do that work.

Because it's a lot more than just me. It's mostly you. It is mostly you.

I actually play a relatively minor part. I try to make sure that we get the Word of God out of the pages and into the thinking arena. But what happens to it at that point is you and you all.

So it's a wonderful thing to have fellowship and have the company, the companionship and the presence of fellow believers. And so as we pray and as we think about our worship and about the learning process that we undertake, we also want to pray for one another. We want to pray that God will manifest His presence through the Holy Spirit, through that which every joint supplies.

Every part of the body is needful. Every part of the body has its value and its place. Some are more visible and obvious than others.

But every single person is a part of God's plan and purpose, particularly within our group and our extended group. So as we go to the Lord in prayer, we can not only pray for ourselves and examine our own souls, but also ask God's blessing on each one that gathers with us in whatever form, whether now or whether later, to partake of God's Word and be built up and edified in the faith. Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege and blessing it is to be named as a

child of God, to be a member of the body of Christ, to be saved by grace.

We thank you for the ongoing care that you minister to us through your Spirit. We thank you for the preservation of the inspired words of Scripture that we are so blessed to have access to. We can access it in so many different ways.

There has probably never been a time in human history when your Word was more available, more understandable, supported by more resources and tools and ways of coming to a good understanding of it. We thank you for the teaching and preaching of your Word throughout the world and those who receive it and are edified and who live in its light. We thank you for the environment of freedom that we enjoy in our country.

We pray for our leaders. We pray for our President, our Senators, our Congressmen, the believers in the judiciary and all of those in every level and every place who are seeking to honor you as they fulfill their obligations and their duties and responsibilities. We pray especially for our President.

He is increasingly under attack for his faith because he has not shied away from testifying to his belief in you and his commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that you will be with him and give him clarity of thought and the ability to communicate clearly and to make the issues clear as people make a choice about who will lead our government for the next four years. We pray that you will be with us as we study.

We ask your blessing on us. May we find in your Word the things that you would have us learn and remember so that we can live our lives in a way that is pleasing in your sight. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. For our script reading this morning, turn with me to the book of Job. Job chapter 9. You are of course familiar with the story of Job.

He sits for a week with his companions who come and they see that his grief is very great and they don't speak anything. You think about that, about coming over and spending time with somebody and not saying a word for an entire week. Then when they do begin discussing the situation which is outside their experience, Job begins in verse 3. He breaks the silence of seven days by saying, May the day perish on which I was born and the night in which it was said a male child is conceived.

May that day be darkness. After he lodges his complaint, if you will, Eliphaz the Temanite responds and in chapters 4 and 5 he attributes the cause of Job's misfortunes and loss of God's protection and seeming absence of God's blessing on some malfunction on Job's part. Job must have sinned.

Job responds in verse 6 and says, No, I'm not being disciplined for my sin. I have a legitimate reason to complain. You all are being unjust to me, he says.

And in verse 29 of that chapter he says, Yield now. Let there be no injustice. Concede.

My righteousness still stands. Is there injustice on my tongue? Cannot my taste discern the unsavory? Wouldn't I know if I had sinned in some way? I have a track record of righteousness that goes back for years. Then he goes on in chapter 7 to talk about the fact that he is confused about why this has happened.

He doesn't find comfort. If you knew why something was happening you would have some rationale. You could make some kind of peace with it.

You could have some sort of thought about it that would get you through. But he can't figure it out. It just seems to be too much.

And so he loathes his life. He says, I sure wouldn't want to live forever. Let me alone.

My days are just a breath. In verse 16 of chapter 7 and then 17 he says, What is man that you should exalt him, that you should set your heart on him, that you should visit him every morning and test him every moment? How long? Will you not look away from me and let me alone till I swallow my saliva? Have I sinned? What have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you set me as your target, so that I am a burden to myself? Why then do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust, and you will seek me diligently, but I will no longer be. Bill Dadd comes back in chapter 8 and says, You know, you're just being kind of hard-headed here.

You won't admit that it's your fault, that you've done something to bring this on yourself. He says in verse 20, God will not cast away the blameless. He will not uphold the evildoers.

He will yet fill your mouth with laughing, and your lips with rejoicing. And those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing, if you repent. You just have to acknowledge that it's your fault.

This brings us just a little bit of context for chapter 9. Job answered and said, Truly I know it is so. But how can a man be righteous before God? If one wished to contend with him, he could not answer him one time out of a thousand. How can you argue with the Almighty if he brings a case against you? He's going to be right a thousand times out of a thousand.

This is 100 percent, 100.00 percent of the time, .000, right? To however many decimal points you want to carry it out, God is always right. How can you argue with him? God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against him and prospered? He removes the mountains, and they do not know when he overturns them in his anger.

He shakes the earth out of its place and its pillars tremble. He commands the sun and it does not rise. He seals off the stars.

He alone spreads out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea. He made the bear,

Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. Very interesting references to constellations in the heavens that were known even in Job's day, which is back, I think, contemporaneous with the first generations of Jacob's family to dwell in Egypt before everything turned sour into bondage.

He does great things past finding out. Yes, wonders without number. If he goes by me, I do not see him.

If he moves past, I do not perceive him. If he takes away, who can hinder him? Who can say to him, what are you doing? God will not withdraw his anger. The allies of the proud lie prostrate beneath him.

Now you know, and I think you can begin to see why we're covering this as our scripture reading, where did we leave Moses last time? He is on Mount Sinai. God is descending in the cloud, and God is doing what? Passing before Moses. And he says, you cannot see my face.

I will cover you with my hand while I pass by, and you'll hear the proclamation, but you won't see my face. And then as I'm leaving, I'll take away my hand, and you will see me from behind. But no man can see my face and live.

Job says, he does great things past finding out, wonders without number. If he goes by me, I do not see. If he moves past me, I do not perceive him.

If he takes away, who can hinder him? Who can say to him, what are you doing? Of course, Moses is advancing on this position, isn't he? Because Moses does say, what are you doing? Moses does see to an extent when he comes by. And so there is progress from the time of Job to the time of Moses, isn't there? There is an unfolding. There is a greater revelation.

There is a greater opportunity. Well, you look at the distance. You know how you do in math when you extrapolate or when you're doing graphing and things, and you have a couple of points, and you plot a line, and you say, well, based on this trend, I can project where it's going to be in the future.

Well, you put a dot on the graph at Job, put a dot on the graph at Moses, and then figure where we are. How much more revelation, how much more opportunity is there, especially after the coming of the Lord Jesus? So when he moves, we should be able to see. When he comes past, we should be able to perceive.

Who can say to him, what are you doing? God will not withdraw his anger. Actually, God can withdraw his anger, can't he? We have to ask ourselves, what is the difference between Job's situation and Moses' situation? What is the difference between the time of Job's great suffering and the time of divine discipline on Israel because of the golden calf? That's what this chapter is about. How then can I answer him and choose my words to reason with him, Job says? Though I were righteous, I would not answer him.

I would beg mercy of my judge. If I called and he answered me, I would not believe that he was listening to my voice. He crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause.

He will not allow me to catch my breath. Remember earlier he said, I can't even swallow my saliva. He fills me with bitterness.

If it is a matter of strength, indeed he is strong. And if it is a matter of justice, who will appoint my day in court? Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me. Though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse.

What is he saying here? It reminds me of our president in the debates. A lot of people think that the president didn't do well in debates. Whatever you want to think about candidates and so on, suppose you think that the president is right in his positions and yet he doesn't come off as the victor, trouncing his opponent in the debates.

You can be right and yet not be eloquent enough to get your rightness across. You can be in a position to give a warning that no one will heed. You can be in the right and have done things for the right reason and yet you can't produce any kind of effective defense.

The point was made in one of our discussions, I think Friday night, which I think is valid and it has crossed my mind many times, that some of the accusations made against any of our presidents, you can go back in history, and presidents sometimes do things and adopt policies and execute a particular foreign policy and it comes under attack and it comes under criticism. Well, the president can't say all of the reasons why he's doing what he's doing. He is privy to information.

He has got intelligence that is not possible to share with the public. So he may have a very good reason for doing something but he can't say. He can't defend himself publicly because to do so would mess up the alliances that we have, would endanger the operatives that we have.

That's why we have classified information. There is a reason to keep things close to the chest and not reveal them to the world. So what does that require? Well, you have to have faith that the man is the kind of man that when he looks at facts will make the right decision.

This is my point. When you are looking at candidates, a lot of times the media especially wants to make it, well, where does he stand on the issues? Because wherever he stands on the issue, if I can find somebody that matches my view of the issues, then that's what I want. I want to vote a guy in that thinks the same way I do on all of these questions.

The more important question is what kind of man are you putting in? Now that will be reflected in the positions that he holds perhaps. But the positions he holds might also be conditioned by political expediency or by polls or by focus groups or by handlers. The real question is when the chips are down and there is information that comes in that requires a new decision that requires a new synthesis that requires policy that can put many thousands of troops in harm's way, for example, what kind of man is making the decision? Is he a man of principle? Is he a

man that has good principles that are biblically based or not? Because that is going to be the man that will make decisions that he may not be able to explain.

And all he can tell you is, I am a man of principle and I am doing things for the right reasons. I can't tell you why. Parents have to do this sometimes.

There's not time. There's not opportunity. It's inconvenient.

It's not possible to explain to a child why you tell them sit still and don't move. You just have to trust me on this. I worked with a master sergeant in the Marine Corps when I was at Fort Sill.

He was our top sergeant. When I was the chief of the enlisted instruction branch, he was my right-hand guy. He was the senior enlisted.

We had over sixty enlisted instructors, all staff NCOs, some Marines and mostly Army. He was a Marine master sergeant. We would be down there at the branch and occasionally he would share his experiences because he was a Vietnam veteran and had done several tours in Vietnam.

He related to me an episode that happened that he witnessed firsthand. There was a squad moving through the jungles of Vietnam on a patrol following a route that had been mapped out ahead of time and had been planned. They had done this before.

It was a rotating duty and it was their turn. So they were following this somewhat familiar path. All of a sudden a frantic call came over the radio, get out of the jungle.

Get up on the road. Well, normally you'd stay off the roads. Some of the roads are mined.

You're visible. You lose the canopy cover. The enemy can see you.

You can be ambushed from each side of the road. It's a tactically unsound thing to just march your troops down the middle of the road. But there was this frantic call, get up on the road, get up on the road.

Well, the squad leader said, that's nuts. We'll be exposed. I'm not going to put my men in harm's way by putting them up on the road.

Mines and booby traps and everything else, no way. We know our way through the jungle. We're staying in the jungle.

He basically said Roger over the radio, but he didn't get out of the jungle. Well, the reason the frantic call came in is that the last minute some other unit had called in an airstrike on that portion of the jungle because there was an unusual enemy movement. And at the last minute, somebody said, wait a minute, we've got a patrol in that area.

And so they called him and said, get up on the road where the planes can see. They're not

going to bomb the road. They're bombing the jungle.

Well, they didn't get out and they were decimated. Most of them died from friendly fire because the radio guys didn't have time to say, now, listen, we've got an airstrike coming in there. And so you really need to get out of the jungle.

They just had this word. And two minutes later, the bombs started falling. And because this guy made a split-second decision, he said, well, I'll take my own way.

You just don't always have time to explain. So what Job is saying here in chapter nine, he says, who would appoint my day in court? Even if I was righteous, my own mouth would condemn me. I am not eloquent enough.

I can't make the kind of arguments that need to be made. Though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse. I wouldn't be able to make my case, even if I had a case.

If I were, which I'm not, but even if I were righteous, even if I were blameless, I wouldn't be able to stand in front of God and make that case. I don't have the ability. And we see examples like this in our own life.

He says in verse 21, I am blameless, yet I do not know myself. I despise my life. It is all one thing.

So I say he destroys the blameless and the wicked. If the scourge slays suddenly, he laughs at the plight of the innocent. The earth is given into the hand of the wicked.

He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not he, who else could it be? If the innocent are suffering, then God's just, it's too broad of a brush. He's not preserving the remnant.

He's just wiping everybody with the same discipline, wiping them out. My days are swifter than a runner. They flee away.

They see no good. They pass by like swift ships, like an eagle swooping on its prey. If I say I will forget my complaint, I will put off my sad face and wear a smile.

Have you ever tried that? Don't worry, be happy. Oh, okay, fine. I'll just offload my cares and just by an act of will, change my attitude, change my mood.

I am afraid of all my sufferings. I know you will not hold me innocent if I am condemned. Why then do I labor in vain? If I wash myself with snow water and cleanse my hands with soap, yet you will plunge me into the pit and my own clothes will abhor me.

What is this washing a picture of? This is the cleansing power of God at work in those who acknowledge and confess. And he says, I have washed my hands. I've taken a bath in snow water, which is melted snow.

You know, snow is some of the purest water there is. He is not a man as I am that I may answer him. This is the problem.

Job says, I've done all I know how to do, but I can't speak before God. How can I tell him he has made a mistake? How can I make my case? Even if I was blameless and righteous, I wouldn't know how to make the case. He is not a man as I am that I may answer him, that we should go to court together.

Here's the point, verse 33, nor is there any mediator between us who may lay his hand on us both. Who's going to lay his hand on God? Who's going to lay his hand on God? It won't be for another 1,500 years, 1,700 years will there be someone who can lay his hand on God and on man at the same time and mediate because he is the God man. Let him take his rod away from me and do not let the dread of him terrify me.

Then I would speak and not fear him, but it is not so with me. Something has to remove the rod. What does Isaiah say about the coming one? He is wounded for our iniquities, he is bruised for our transgressions.

The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all and by his stripes we are healed. Jesus interposed himself between the rod and the deserving victim. The need for a mediator.

Who may lay his hand on us both? Let's go back now to Exodus chapter 34 where we left Moses last time. As the presence of God descends in the cloud, in verse 5, and you see here, this is not a clincher trinity passage, but it certainly sounds like there are multiple instances of God's presence here. The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there.

The Lord proclaimed the name of the Lord and the Lord passed before him proclaiming. Now that's three different activities that seem to be coming from three different places because the Lord descended and stood with him and is covering him with his hand. The Lord proclaimed the name of the Lord, but this is kind of like introducing yourself.

Normally when you have a guest speaker, somebody else introduces and says all of the accomplishments and gives the resume and the curriculum vitae of the person that is about to speak, then the speaker comes up. We call it blowing your own horn when you come up and say, well let me introduce myself. I have attained this degree and served in that capacity and I am this, I am that and the other and people start saying hmm.

So you get the idea that the Lord stood with him. The Lord is also somehow in a slightly different manner proclaiming the name of Yahweh and Yahweh is passing before him and proclaiming. So I see at least two and possibly three different manifestations of God all in the same area here.

But as I say, it's not a clincher. You can make it work if you compress time and say well God came down and stood with him there, then God stepped away and proclaimed his name and then God paraded by. One manifestation could do all of that.

But here is the most interesting part. The Lord passed by and proclaimed. Now if you are taking notes, I am going to give you the proclamation, the first portion of the proclamation here in Hebrew.

You might want to write each of these names or phrases on a separate line because this is God talking about himself. How many times in the Bible do you have God directly proclaiming himself? How does God introduce himself? What does God think is the most important feature of himself to claim? And this is the word kara by the way, which is the word that is used to call or to cry out. Q-A-R-A, kara.

Yahweh trooped by. Yahweh passed before him. Yahweh wore his face.

Passed in front of him and called out kara. Now your first line is Yahweh, Yahweh. The Tetragrammaton YHWH is the way it is written in Hebrew.

The Lord, the Lord. Any time you find the Lord in your King James or New King James in the Old Testament, this is typically representing the Tetragrammaton YHWH, Yod, Wau, Hei, Wau in Hebrew. The Lord, the Lord.

Now in your New King James you have the Lord, the Lord God, but I think this is the Lord, the Lord, first line. Second line, El, E-L. This is the root of the word Elohim, Elohim but it means God.

The Lord, the Lord. God. Now he is going to give some descriptive terms about himself.

The Lord, the Lord. God. Then he says merciful, showing mercy and gracious, showing grace.

The first of these is Rachum, R-A-C-H-U-M. Rachum. The second one is Chanun, C-H-A-N-U-N.

Rachum v'Chanun. Now these two are tied together with the word and which is just the letter Wau, once again. Rachum v'Chanun.

And if anything, these modify the word God. YHWH, YHWH. The merciful and gracious God.

Merciful and gracious. Those two are definitely linked together. Then you have Erek, E-R-E-K.

This means being merciful and bearing with. This has the idea of long suffering. It means to be indulgent.

It has the idea of length, of lengthening something. So in Numbers 14.18 for example, it says the Lord is long suffering and abundant in mercy. It is basically a repeat of this passage.

You have the same thing in Deuteronomy. Joel, one of the later prophets in Joel 2.13 says, Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God for He is gracious and merciful.

Rachum v'Chanun. Slow to anger and of great kindness and He relents from doing harm. In Jonah chapter 4, you remember Jonah preaches, Nineveh repents.

Jonah was up there to watch the big show and it didn't happen. And then he says, Ah Lord, Jonah 4.2, was this not what I said when I was still in my country? What did you send me up here for? That's why I was trying to go to Tarshish. I knew this was going to be a big waste of time.

And he says, Ah Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? I mean, Ah is in the text. It's like, Oy, oy vey. Ah Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Now, you got to be pretty presumptuous to basically say, I told you so to God.

Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish, for I know that you are a Rachum v'Chanun God. He says, I know this. I guess they picked it up in prophet school or it came with a gift or something because all the prophets know that God is first and foremost, Rachum v'Chanun, merciful and gracious.

Slow to anger, abundant in loving kindness, one who relents from doing harm. He's got the very same formula that Joel has. And as far as we know, Joel and Nineveh, I mean Jonah and Joel, they both start with a J, but that's as close as those two ever got to each other.

Nahum, chapter 1 and verse 3, the Lord is slow to anger and great in power and will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord has his way in the whirlwind and the storm and the clouds are the dust of his feet. Remember that big firmament that's between the cherubim and the throne of God that Ezekiel saw? Psalm 86, 15.

Oh Lord, you are a God full of compassion and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth. So over and over, there are countless places in the Old Testament, but this word, Erek, that means longsuffering. I don't know if you remember our study back in Kohelet, back in the Ecclesiastes, but when we got to chapter 7 and verse 8, we had a verse that said, the end of a thing is better than its beginning.

The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Remember that? And when we looked at the words there, the end of a thing is better than its beginning basically says it's not how you start, it's how you finish. That's what the lesson was last Sunday.

It's not how you start. Many of the kings in Judah in particular started well, but they didn't all finish well. The end of a thing is better than its beginning.

It's not how you start, it's how you finish. And then the second part of that verse says, the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. And when we looked at those words in Hebrew, patient in spirit is Erek.

It's the long in spirit is better than the tall in spirit. It's the enduring nature of your spirit, not the pride of your spirit, not the height that it attains, not the fame and the prominence that it gets. And so Solomon says, it's not the height of your spirit, it's its length.

How long do you last, not how tall do you stand? Many little short people make good marathon

runners, don't they? Less weight to propel for the 26.3 miles. Anyway, that's that same word, Ecclesiastes 7.8. So, we have these three. Now, we talked about, I think we talked about Rachum and Hanun last time.

Let me just briefly review what these words connote. Because this is the description of God. I mean, why are we dwelling on this? God has appeared.

He is standing by Moses. He is parading in front of Moses. He is speaking before Moses and he says his name, Yahweh.

Yahweh. How many times have we seen that doubled name? Moses, Moses. Jacob, Jacob.

Saul, Saul. Why persecutest thou me? Well, God says his own name and he doubles it. It's great emphasis.

Yahweh, Yahweh. And then he describes himself in these terms, Rachum, Hanun, Erech. Merciful, gracious, enduring.

Enduring. Length is the main idea of Erech. Rachum, the very first word here, has the idea of loving tenderness.

It's used of a mother dandling her child on her knee, fondling her child, a mother toward her children, sympathy, compassion, benevolent and solicitous attitude, for protecting and preserving. It's a maternal word. It is a loving and a caring word.

It is used in the Bible, many places as I have already showed you, for God. And always in the company of these other words. Psalm 86, 15.

You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in mercy and truth, full of Rachum and Hanun, Erech and abundant in Chesed and Emmet. Mercy and truth. I already gave you Joel 2.13. I gave you Jonah 4.2. Along with Erech, this word occurs.

Many, many places in Scripture you find this complex because this is the nature of God. So, what about the God of Reformed Theology? What about the God of Calvinism? He is sovereign. God, when He comes down, does not say, Yahweh, Yahweh, the sovereign God.

Does He? He doesn't say, Yahweh, Yahweh, the eternally decreeing God. Yahweh, Yahweh, the crunch you under my boot heel God, unless I feel like sparing a few of you. I'm God, you're like ants on the floor.

I'm going to walk through the room and I'll step where I want to and those ants that I don't step on, well, they survive. This is the God of Reformed Theology. It's a scary, blasphemous way of construing or misconstruing the Scriptures.

Misunderstanding the Scriptures. 2 Chronicles 30.9. If you return to the Lord, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who lead them captive so that they may

come back to this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him.

This is the God of the Bible. This is the God who proclaims Himself. The very first thing He says is, I am El Rahim.

Sounds like some Dark Ages leader in the desert, doesn't it? You know, El Sid? Well, you've got El Rahim. El Rahim v'Hanun. Hanun, C-H-A-N-A-N, is what this comes from.

Hanun is a form of it. And that is the word for mercy. So we have first of all this attitude of compassion and tenderness, affectionate love that a mother has for its child.

If you don't put anything else next to Rahim, it's mother for child. Hanun, C-H-A-N-U-N, has the idea of being merciful. It is also in Joel 2.13, Jonah 4.2, Psalm 86.15, Psalm 100.3.8, Nehemiah, one of the last records that we have in the Old Testament.

They refused to obey. Nehemiah 9.17, they refused to obey. They were not mindful of your wonders that you did among them.

They hardened their necks and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage. This is Nehemiah recounting our episode. They appointed a leader to return to their bondage, but you are a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful.

Rahim v'Hanun, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and did not forsake them. Nehemiah 9.17, same thing in verse 31 of that same chapter. Nevertheless in your great mercy you did not utterly consume them nor forsake them, for you are a God gracious and merciful.

Two instances in that. And 2 Chronicles 39, you notice that the verses are the same for all of these words. Rahim, Hanun, Erek.

These are the three attributes that God puts first. He says His name twice and then He says, I have maternal compassion for you. I am merciful, kind and gracious.

This is what Hanun means, merciful, kind, gracious. And then Erek, long suffering, enduring, patient, long in spirit, Solomon calls it. Well, what do we think of when we think of God? What do we think when we look up? What do we think when we pray? These are the characteristics that God puts forward about Himself.

He says, yes, thou shalt have no other gods before me. But who would want another God? Who would want a God other than the merciful, gracious and long suffering God? Those are His primary attributes. I wish in our essence box of ten factors, these were first.

We talk about sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love. That box was made up by Calvinists. You know the tenfold essence box that a lot of us learned? What's the first one? Sovereignty.

The first one ought to be compassion, mercy and long suffering. Those are the first three

characteristics in the essence box. We'll get to the rest of them when we come back from the break.