

## **SHALOM - peace with God - peace with our portion.**

We're exploring this focus by asking 4 questions...

*Are you at peace with yourself?*

*Are you at peace with others?*

*Are you at peace with creation?*

*Are you at peace with God?*

When we examined this question of being at peace with ourselves a few weeks ago, Pastor Fred spoke of being at peace with our **unchangeables**. Tonight as we speak to finding Shalom in peace with God, I would point in part to our being at peace with his **unknowables**.

**Deuteronomy 29:29:**

*The Lord our God has secrets known to no one.*

*We are not accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable forever for all that he has revealed to us, so that we may obey all the terms of these instructions.*

Peter Senge coined the term "**Expert-delusion.**" - *We've watched some news, we've read some articles. And in our conversations and posts we become contentious, declarative, and aggressive in our stance with a posture that transcends that of someone with a mere opinion and into the delusional posture of an expert.*

We have a deep rooted fear of simply saying – "**I don't know.**"

There's an unspoken pressure to have a stance or opinion on every single issue of our day.

And I share this, because this fear of admitting that we don't know can creep into our relationship with God. It can cripple our peace with God's sovereignty. It can cripple our Shalom.

*We all have a desire to know God and be known by him.*

**The comfort – we can know Him. (Profoundly Intimate)**

**The discomfort - we never will fully. (Infinitely Powerful)**

monk from Holland once said: *"Twenty one years I have prayed and meditated with the monks of the abbey. Hours and hours of the day and night. And yet...*

*I hope that I do not shock or scandalize anybody: God was really unknown to me."*

**Thomas Aquinas - "the highest knowledge of God is to know that we don't know God".**

We will only truly find peace with God when we are at **peace with His unknowables**.

**Exodus 33** Moses makes God promise that He wouldn't forsake the Israelites in spite of their failings. That he wouldn't leave or forsake THEM. God says yes. His **presence** would go with them.

And yet when Moses then asks to see God's glory, His **essence...**

God tells Moses flat out *"you cannot see my face, for no man can see me and live"*

Moses was obedient to what God had made clear, and at peace with what remained a mystery. It's how he would could say in his farewell address to the Israelites, Deuteronomy, in chapter 29, verse 29: *The Lord our God has secrets known to no one.*

*We are not accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable forever for all that he has revealed to us, so that we may obey all the terms of these instructions.*

## **MYSTERY**

### **Isaiah 55:8-9**

*“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.*

*For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

### **Isaiah 40**

*To whom can you compare God? What image can you find to resemble him?*

*God sits above the circle of the earth. The people below seem like grasshoppers to him!*

*He spreads out the heavens like a curtain and makes his tent from them.*

*Have you never heard? Have you never understood?*

*The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth.*

*He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding.*

We deeply desire to make God like us. But He isn't. As a result so many of us subconsciously live under a layer of distrust and a lack of shalom because we cave to this impulse to turn God into something familiar... when He certainly is not

*“will you still call me a good good father if you never have a kid who can call you the same?”*

In that moment I was coming to peace with my portion.

But it also a step toward peace with God and his sovereignty.

God's **sovereignty** speaks to God's reign and His provision and purposes for us.

It's the belief that God is in control.

***Our modern western culture says that to trust in something you don't fully understand is folly.***

Studying a star made a scientist in the 90's call himself “a trouble theorist”

It made all his genuine, real life expertise feel delusional.

*How much greater the universe as a whole?*

*How much greater its Creator?*

We'll never conquer all God's mysteries. We must come to peace with them.

We have to come to a peace with his mysteries, especially in light of His sovereignty.

The more you look at scripture, the more you realize **half truths** are the Father of Lie's native tongue.

**“everything happens for a reason.”**

The idea: *everything is good if you wait long enough. We just don't know the reason yet.*

**We don't like mystery and unanswered questions.**

**We certainly don't like mystery within our misery.**

Philip Yancey quotes an amputee in his book the Problem of Pain who admitted:

*“my religious friends were the most depressing, irritating part of the entire experience.”*

This “everything happens for a reason” belief that everything is good if you wait long enough comes from this powerful verse that speaks to God's sovereignty:

**Romans 8:28 - *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him***

**It doesn't say that everything that happens is good.**

- Ecclesiastes 12:14 – *“God will bring every deed to judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.”*

**It doesn't say everything that happens is from God.**

- Ecclesiastes 12:14 – “deeds” are done by me and you.

**It doesn't say everything is complete with divine reasons why it happened.**

**But ...God is at work in all things.**

*Raj's first years of his life.*

It didn't happen according to God's will. Evil is evil. Period.

The Bible recognizes that we will experience both good and evil in this life.

The enemy though loves for us to pin everything on God and Divine reasons.

It makes God the author of suffering and the perpetrator of evil.

He knows it will eventually give way to anger at God.

As well as give people fuel to slander Him...

*“If God is responsible for this he can't be a good or he can't be God.”*

But here's 3 quick ones that aren't God: ***The Mirror, Mother Nature, Murphy's Law.***

**Mirror** - Sometimes what we chalk up as God's will is self inflicted.

Bad choices can have consequences.

And pointing to everything happening for a reason is an abdication of accountability.

**Mother nature** – creation is broken and as Romans 8 says in the verses right before 28– creation is also marred and waiting for restoration to Eden.

- But you'll see twisted views on God's sovereignty attributing hurricanes hitting the coast as proof of God's stance against somebody's lifestyle. It's simply nature.

**Murphy's law** – Adam's legacy. Life is hard. Not just hardened soil and weeds in the ground.

- We live in a messy, chaotic, disordered world.
- Car accidents, broken appliances, chronic illness... sometimes things that can possibly go wrong going wrong.

We have to stop attributing the Devil's punches with God's plans.

We have to stop confusing Adam's legacy with God's sovereignty.

A broken creation creates more brokenness. Hurt people hurt people.

And we will experience both good and evil in this life.

**Joseph's** life ... after all the pain and trauma others inflicted on him he says in **Genesis 50:20**  
*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*

God didn't cause or create Joseph's pain and trauma, but he did redeem it. That's my hope.

What happens in life that's evil and without divine reasons, God still restores and redeems.

Deuteronomy 29:29

*The Lord our God has secrets known to no one.*

*We are not accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable forever for all that he has revealed to us, (WHY?) - so that we may obey all the terms of these instructions.*

What's important isn't finding a silver lining.

What's important is our obedience, even in the midst of the questions and mystery.

*Steph's testimony and Raj's miraculously matching degenerative conditions.*

I'll never forget when we got the call about Raj's diagnosis of a brain malformation... on our way to Steph's brain surgeon.

*"though he slay me, yet I will trust in him."*

This was the beginning of our finding peace with God's sovereignty even amidst Raj's diagnosis.

A lot of the sermon has been about mystery producing humility, rather than an expert delusion.

But mystery should also produce awe and wonder.

And that wonder should fuel our worship.

*You are beautiful beyond description Too marvelous for words*

*Too wonderful for comprehension / Like nothing ever seen or heard*

*Who can grasp Your infinite wisdom? / Who can fathom the depth of Your love?*

*You are beautiful beyond description / Majesty, enthroned above*

*And I stand, I stand in awe of You*

*Holy God, to whom all praise is due / I stand in awe of You*

As the revivalist **John Wesley** once said of Deuteronomy 29:29: *"...the ways and judgments of God... are often times hidden from us, unsearchable by our shallow capacities, and matter for our adoration, not our enquiry."*