

The Gathering Church
Dan's message 8/9/26
Knowing God as He is (Week 9) - Overview

God is Holy
God is Love
God is Merciful
God is Everywhere
God is Transcendent
God is Omniscient
God is Sovereign
God is Faithful

Series Theme: We worship God best when we know Him as He has revealed Himself—not as we imagine Him to be. Each message explored one of God's attributes and showed how a right view of God transforms worship, trust, obedience, and everyday living.

Themes Throughout the Series

- What you believe about God shapes how you live.
- God must be known through Scripture rather than imagination.
- God's attributes work together in perfect harmony.
- A greater vision of God produces deeper worship and humility.
- Knowing God's character is meant to transform life.
- The Christian life is about both admiring God's character and reflecting it to the world.
- Jesus most clearly reveals God's character.

One-Sentence Summary: The more clearly we know God as He truly is, the more deeply we worship Him, trust Him, and become people who faithfully reflect His character in the world.

Repeated Quote:

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." AW Tozar

Week 1 — God Is Holy

Week 2 — God Is Love

Week 3 — God Is Mercy

Week 4 — God Is Omnipresent

Week 5 — God Is Transcendent

Week 6 — God Is Just

Week 7 — God Is Sovereign Week 8 — God Is Faithful

Week 1 — God Is Holy — Sonia — 2026-06-14

Big Ideas

- Knowing God begins with knowing who He truly is.
- What we believe about God shapes worship and daily living.
- God's attributes cannot be separated without distorting who He is.
- God's holiness leads to repentance, reverence, and mission.

Memorable takeaway: "The more we know God, the less willing we are to accept distorted ideas about Him."

Week 2 — God Is Love – Dan – 2026-06-21

Big Ideas

- God does not merely possess love—He is love.
- Scripture must shape our understanding of God.
- *“Love is an essential attribute of God’s being.” Tozer says that this means “that in God is the summation of all love so that all love comes from God. And it means that God’s love conditions all of the His other attributes, so that God can do nothing except that he does it in love.”*
- God's love never conflicts with His justice or holiness. His love, mercy and grace flow together in harmony with His holiness, righteousness and justice.
- **Agape love** seeks another person's good at personal cost.
Romans 5:8 “God demonstrated his love for us (not that in while we did everything perfectly it was easy for him to love us....NO), in that while we were yet sinners, he died for us.”
- God’s agape love is best seen in the father of the prodigal son who loves regardless of what the son can give me in return. He squandered his possessions, but he has learned to **“need men less but love men more.”** CS. Lewis would call this a disinterested love. **“I delight more in being loved without being needed.”** (Reality for us is ... we want to be loved and needed.) God loves me regardless of my need for him. Its agape love.

Memorable takeaway: “Know God so that you can know yourself—and let knowing Him change how you live.”

Week 3 — God Is Mercy – Sonia – 2026-06-28

Big Ideas

- Mercy is God's active compassion toward broken sinners.
- God's mercy is woven throughout His covenant story.
- The cross is where mercy and justice meet.
- Those who receive mercy are called to show mercy.

Memorable takeaway: “Mercy is God's hand of justice, stilled.”

Week 4 — God Is Omnipresent

Speaker: Dan

Date: July 5, 2026

Big Ideas

- God is everywhere. And if God is everywhere, I am never alone or will never be abandoned. At no time am I without a direct line to his comfort, care, correction, power, all of who He is).
- *“in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28)*; our lives are held in His is hands. And I can rest in Who He is; don’t have to be anxious. He is with me.
- Tozer's Ocean Illustration: God’s Presence is like the Ocean. We are a bucket in the bottom of the ocean. “God is nearer to you than you are to yourself.”
- We cannot outrun God's presence. Psalmist says, *“where can I flee from your presence.” (Psalm 139).*

- There is a difference between **God's universal presence** and His **manifest presence**. If it's true that God is everywhere, why can some people know him and others not. Why can some people hear his voice and others cannot?

We have a connection to his manifest presence through the Spirit. *"He will never leave us or forsake us" Hebrews 13:5*, because we are his children.

- We need to learn to rest in His presence. Like a child who has lost his parents in the store. When he finds them he rests. Without them he is scared.
- **Tozer talks about Heaven and Hell and says** (and I'm paraphrasing Tozer) "even if Hell is not as bad as scripture talks about, and there is no "fire and eternal torment", Hell would still be Hell because those there would not be able to know God's manifest presence and would be forever excluded from the enjoyment of seeing God's face. And even if heaven is not as great as Scripture talks about, "streets of gold, mansions, crowns, etc." it would still be heaven because we will be with God. We will know him like we have never known him before.
- **Scuba tank illustration:** Holy Spirit is our regulator. We must actively attach ourselves to his presence through the spirit's activity in our lives).

Memorable takeaway: Practice living with an awareness of God's presence.

Week 5 — God Is Transcendent – Sonia – 2026-08-12

Big Ideas

- God is infinitely above and beyond creation.
- We must resist shrinking God to human proportions.
- A high view of God produces awe and worship.
- The transcendent Creator entered creation through Christ.

Memorable takeaway: "Your thoughts of God are too human."

Week 6 — God Is Just - Dan – 2026-07-19

Big Ideas

- God is the standard of justice. 'The Lord our righteousness.' (Jehovah Tsidkenu)
- Justice and mercy perfectly coexist in God.
- God's perfect knowledge ensures perfect judgment.
- Justice judges; mercy withholds deserved judgment; grace gives undeserved favor.
- God is perfectly just. He cannot ignore sin. Yet through Christ, He provides a way to declare sinners righteous without compromising His justice. God remains "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."
- He is **the Lord who is "Just and our Justifier"**

Romans 3:23-26 (NASB) 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Goal of His Justice is Restorative (Restored relationship with his creation).

Memorable takeaway: “Our understanding of justice is only the starting point for understanding God's justice.”

Week 7 — God Is Sovereign — Sonia — 2026-07-26

Big Ideas

- The Lord reigns over all creation.
- God rules history with wisdom and purpose.
- Scripture—not feelings—*must* shape our understanding of God.
- The proper response is trust, surrender, and hope in Christ.

Memorable takeaway: “The Lord reigns. Trust Him completely.”

Week 8 — God Is Faithful — Dan — 2026-08-02

Big Ideas

- God's faithfulness is constant, reliable, and rooted in His covenant promises.
- The story of Hosea and Gomer illustrates God's relentless pursuit of His unfaithful people and His desire to restore them—not merely forgive them.
- Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's faithfulness: every promise is 'Yes and Amen' in Him.
- The goal of studying God's attributes is not merely to **admire them but to mirror them by walking faithfully through the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Memorable takeaway: “Don't just admire God's faithfulness— live it out by becoming a faithful reflection of His character.”

How are we living faithful in a world of unfaithfulness.

Overarching View — God's Bigness

Taken together, God's holiness, transcendence, and sovereignty give us a sweeping vision of His bigness. God is not simply bigger than our problems, stronger than our enemies, or wiser than our plans—**He is altogether unlike us.** His holiness means He is set apart in perfect purity and glory; His transcendence means He is infinitely above and beyond creation; and His sovereignty means He reigns over all things with unmatched authority, wisdom, and purpose.

God's bigness confronts the small, human-sized versions of God we are tempted to create. We often measure Him by our feelings, circumstances, assumptions, or limitations, but Scripture calls us to see Him as He has revealed Himself. He is **holy** enough to expose sin, **transcendent** enough to exceed our understanding, and **sovereign** enough to govern history without confusion or fear. Nothing about Him is partial, weak, reactive, or uncertain.

This vision does not push God farther away from us; it makes His nearness more astonishing. The transcendent Creator entered creation through Christ. The holy God made a way for sinners to repent and draw near. The sovereign King rules not with randomness, but with redemptive purpose. **God's greatness therefore produces awe, repentance, worship, trust, surrender, and hope.**

An overarching view of God's bigness helps us see that **He cannot be reduced, managed, or reimagined.** He must be received as He is: holy in character, high above creation, and reigning overall. The proper

response is not to shrink Him down, so He feels easier to understand, but to **lift our eyes, bow our hearts, and trust Him completely.**

God's Bigness

1. God Is Bigger Than Our Ideas About Him

Because God is holy, transcendent, and sovereign, **He cannot be reduced to the limits of human imagination, emotion, or experience.** A right view of God begins with receiving Him as He has revealed Himself in Scripture.

- Where are we most tempted to shrink God down to human proportions?
- How does Scripture correct distorted or incomplete views of God?
- What changes when we remember that God is altogether unlike us?

2. God's Bigness Produces Awe and Trust

God's holiness leads us to reverence and repentance, His transcendence leads us to awe and worship, and His sovereignty leads us to trust and surrender. Seeing God rightly reshapes how we respond to Him in everyday life.

- Which response comes most naturally to you: awe, repentance, worship, trust, surrender, or hope?
- Which response is hardest for you right now, and why?
- How does God's sovereignty help us trust Him when life feels uncertain?

3. God's Greatness Makes His Nearness More Astonishing

The bigness of God does not mean He is distant or unreachable. In Christ, the transcendent Creator entered creation, the holy God made a way for sinners to draw near, and the sovereign King revealed His redemptive purpose.

- Why is God's nearness more meaningful when we first understand His greatness?
- How does Christ show us both the bigness and nearness of God?
- What would it look like this week to lift your eyes, bow your heart, and trust Him completely?

Layering God's Bigness with God's Mercy

When God's mercy is layered onto His bigness, we see that His greatness is not cold, distant, or indifferent. **The God who is holy, transcendent, and sovereign is also actively compassionate toward broken sinners.** His mercy does not make Him less holy, less high, or less sovereign; it reveals the depth of His character. The One who reigns over all does not look away from human need—He moves toward it with covenant faithfulness and redemptive compassion.

This means God's bigness magnifies His mercy.

- Because He is holy, **His mercy is not tolerance of sin but compassion that deals truthfully with sin.**
- Because He is transcendent, **His mercy is not limited by human weakness or exhaustion.**
- Because He is sovereign, His mercy is not accidental or uncertain, but purposeful and powerful. At the cross, mercy and justice meet, showing that God's hand of justice was not erased but stilled in Christ for the sake of sinners.

The takeaway—"Mercy is God's hand of justice, stilled"—helps us hold together God's majesty and tenderness. God is big enough to judge what is evil, holy enough to oppose sin, sovereign enough to accomplish redemption, and merciful enough to stay His hand and offer grace. His mercy is not weakness; it is divine strength moving toward the undeserving with compassion.

So an overarching view of God's bigness must include mercy: the holy God who exposes sin is the merciful God who provides cleansing; the transcendent God, who is beyond us, is the merciful God who comes near in Christ; the sovereign God who reigns over all is the merciful God who rules with redemptive purpose. To know God as He is, we must behold both His greatness and His compassion—and then become people who show mercy because we have received mercy.

Reflection Question: How does seeing God as both infinitely big and deeply merciful change the way you respond to your sin, your weakness, and the needs of others?

Series Conclusion

As we conclude *Knowing God As He Is*, we are reminded that God cannot be reduced to one attribute or reshaped by our assumptions. He is holy in perfect purity, merciful toward broken sinners, transcendent above all creation, and sovereign over every detail of history. His bigness does not make Him distant; it makes His mercy more astonishing, His nearness more precious, and His rule more trustworthy. The more clearly we behold God as He has revealed Himself, the more fully we are drawn to worship, repentance, surrender, and hope in Christ—and the less willing we become to accept any view of Him that is smaller than the truth.