

## **Could He be Enough for You?**

by Pastor Kurt Hoover

### Could He be Litany based on Psalm 43

Leader: I sought the Lord, and he answered me

**All: and delivered me from all my fears.**

Leader: Those who look to him are radiant,

**All: and their faces shall never be ashamed.**

Leader: This poor child cried, and the Lord heard me

**All: and saved me out of all my troubles.**

Leader: The angel of the Lord encamps

**All: around those who fear him, and delivers them.**

Leader: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!

**All: Blessed is the child who takes refuge in him!**

**Jeremiah 23:23-29** <sup>23</sup> “Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? <sup>24</sup> Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord. <sup>25</sup> I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ <sup>26</sup> How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, <sup>27</sup> who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? <sup>28</sup> Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the Lord. <sup>29</sup> Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

**Acts 17:22-27** <sup>22</sup> So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. <sup>26</sup> And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the

boundaries of their dwelling place,<sup>27</sup> that they should *seek* God, and perhaps *feel their way* toward him and *find* him. **Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,**

**Mark 6:30-44**<sup>30</sup> The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.<sup>31</sup> And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.<sup>32</sup> And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.<sup>33</sup> Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.<sup>34</sup> When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.<sup>35</sup> And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late.<sup>36</sup> Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”<sup>37</sup> But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?”<sup>38</sup> And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.”<sup>39</sup> Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass.<sup>40</sup> So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties.<sup>41</sup> And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all.<sup>42</sup> And they all ate and were satisfied.<sup>43</sup> And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish.<sup>44</sup> And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

*<sup>22</sup> Yet he is actually not far from each one of us!*  
– Acts 17:27

**He and his team were tired. They had worked all day long, for the whole week. Not even enough time to eat. Traveling, healing, they returned to Jesus who knows his servants needs. They were headed to the wilderness for some much-needed R n R. Just the disciples and Jesus alone on a deserted beach, no**

**demands, time to talk, celebration and storytelling of the many amazing ways the saw God at work through them. They needed this!**

**I like to think Jesus sat on the bow of the boat assessing the needs of each disciple. His back to the deserted wilderness shore. (When is the last time you were on a boat) The disciples most likely being lulled to sleep by the gentle movement of the boat upon the water, the bright reflection of the sun off the waves, the spray of saltwater forcing them to close their eyes. A struggle for already exhausted men to stay awake.**

**Jesus has just finished his plan of what each disciple needs to hear to rest and recover from the exhaustion that comes from handing your self over to a higher power. He is going to set them free from their pride this time. Jesus can hear the squawking of the sea gulls getting louder, He can smell the brine and fermenting seaweed... a sure sign that they have almost reached shore.**

**Jesus takes one last look at His disciples, his preachers, his chosen with great expectations for their rest. But as he slowly turns His head, in and amongst the sound of screeching sea gulls and crashing waves, He hears another sound. The unmistakable sound of a crowd echoing off the water. And sure enough as he turns his head looking trough the fog of ocean spray he sees the same need and desperation that he was hoping to recover from.**

**And what does God have to say in the face of our need and desperation? What does Jeus do with his interruption? The Bible is clear... What stood out to the disciples retelling this event (and what stands out to us today) was that Jesus had compassion on them. He didn't sigh and say, 'here we go again.' He didn't turn the boat around and stick to his plans.**

**He had compassion on them and in the moment, or perhaps later when one of the disciples asked why he went into the crowd... Jesus said they are like sheep without a shepherd.**

**They want nothing more but to hear the shepherd's voice! And it was for this reason that God became a man. That the promise would become real. It is the sick in need (who see God) not the healthy...)**

**When the boat got to the other side the beach was not deserted. Thousands had gathered – far from town, out in the wilderness because Jesus had something to offer far greater than food.**

**The feeding of thousands is a miracle, but not so much in the defying of natural law to multiply food. What makes this whole history worth telling is the miracle that God actually has compassion for you. In the midst of your need he has the words that will set you free. He is enough for you! In Him you are enough. Your shepherd was just around the corner, He holds you know and that is enough.**

**What is your story, what has you chasing around the sea for God?? What has you lost like sheep without a shepherd?? What lies or empty promise do we tell each other that would make us forget God's name??**

*God is actually not far from each one of us! (Acts 17:27)*

**God not only desire to be found by us, but he has been walking with us the whole time. He never left, he is not far off!**

**I have to admit I am often skeptical of VBS themes. There is so much that goes into producing a VBS curriculum now adays, so much competition for the producers that it is easy to oversimplify and commercialize the Gospel.**

**I was deeply weary of ‘Finding’ God on Mystery Island. I love the Island theme. We had an amazing shark costume and Pirates. It was fun, but come on – the last thing we want to do is teach kids that it is up to them to find God. As if God is hiding from them. God forbid we teach such a lesson to children.**

**But, Mondays lesson eased my fears. Acts 17. Paul talking to the Athenian intellectuals and elites about their unknown God. Verse 27. After Paul points out that the God who created everything, does not need us to provide anything for him, he does not live in temples ... In fact we are dependent on God for our life and breath. He created us ... *that we should seek God, and perhaps feel our way toward him and find him.***

**I mean it is clear there. Twice Paul describes God’s desire that we should find Him... Seek him and perhaps we might be able feel our way through our limited human abilities and understanding – like a blind beggar in the street – who knows perhaps we will feel our way toward Him and find Him...Not because of our effort, but because God is and always has been *...not far from each one of us,***

**So yes, we can admit that our lives are a mystery and that we are meant to find God, but not because we are good at looking but, because God wants to be found.**

**Is God hard to find? NO! In fact he is really bad at Hid and seek. Because he wants to be found. God is showing himself to us all the time, through creation, through our church friends, the love and care of parents, and through his son Jesus Christ. God knows what it is like to be one of us. He was a baby, he was a child having fun playing pretend with his friends, making new friends... And as Roman 5:8 clearly states.**

**While we were still sinners, while we were still lost, in the midst of our doubts and blind feeling through life ... God dies for us. In the midst of our mystery... Christ died for you to show ... with no mistaking, exactly who God is. God is the one who would go to any length to be found by you. In the midst of your doubt and in the midst of your own convoluted and grasping ideas of who God might be... Jesus is not far off! God has been there the whole time.**

**That was our theme for VBS – finding God on Mystery Island - perhaps it is better to say being found by God in the mystery of our lives.**

- 1) Great – HE shows himself to us (we don't get to pick him he picks us)**
- 2) Almighty – nothing is too hard for him (Jonah is us when we take things into our own hands)**
- 3) Ruler – God does not change – always present – shows himself through majesty of nature.**
- 4) Emmanuel - While still sinner – God dies for us to show himself to us.**
- 5) Trust worthy – Faith is when God makes trust. Faith is the response God creates in us when we see he is near.**

**That was our theme for VBS – finding God on Mystery Island - perhaps it is better to say being found by God in the mystery of our lives.**

**Which brings me to one more clear and applicable lesson from the theme of finding God in the mystery of life. One more application of Paul's conversation with the Athenians.**

**Does God ever hide? And you may be surprised to find that the answer is unequivocally and undeniably ... yes. God will not be found in your success. God will not be found in your**

**striving to understand or define Him. God will not let you claim your own righteousness in following His laws or human accomplishment. In those things God is surprisingly silent. God does not want to be found there.**

**Which leave only one question, ‘where does God want to be found?’ God want to be found in the living presence and forgiveness of a His son in the act of taking your sin from you. God want to be found in the act of forgiveness and cleansing. God will only be found in Mercy and Compassion. The Sacraments of Baptism and Communion are where God is most clearly visible.**

**That is why the miracle of thousands being fed is so clearly remembered by the disciples, not because they saw God in the Miracle, but because they got a glimpse of God, they found God in Jesus Compassion for the crowd... for you!**

**Can you hide from God – NO! Does God hide from you – well yes, he will not be found in your success, your accomplishments, you’re striving or in world religions (perhaps it is possible) to feel their way toward... Yet HE is never far off.**

**The miracle is that God has compassion on you. He knows your need and desperation. Like sheep without a shepherd.**

**God shows himself in forgiveness, He gives us one very clear glimpse of who he is, and it is the forgiving presence of Jesus Christ. A very clear promise of His presence!**