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Series: Coronavirus Series

“WHERE IS YOUR GOD?”

(Psalm 115)

Psalm 115:1–2-----¹ **Not unto us, O LORD**, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth. ² Why should the Gentiles say, “So where is their God?”

In the movie *Bruce Almighty*, Bruce Nolan (played by Jim Carrey) is a news reporter facing a midlife meltdown. In one afternoon, his entire world collapses:

- First, the anchor-desk position he deserved goes to his arrogant co-worker Evan.
- Second, he makes a fool of himself during a live news report and is fired.
- Third, his car is vandalized, and,
- Fourth, when he attempts to protect a homeless man from harassment, a gang turns on him and beats him silly.

When Nolan finally makes it **to his girlfriend Grace's** apartment he angrily vents about everything that had happened to him that day. He is angry with his boss, his life, and most of all, with God.

After listening with concern, Grace gently responds, **"Well, thank God you're all right."**

Nolan snorts, "God... yeah, let's thank God, shall we? ...from whom blessings are raining down upon me."

Grace replies, **"Bruce, please don't do that. You know everything happens for a reason."**

"That, I don't need. That is a cliché. That is not helpful to me. 'A bird in the hand's worth two in the bush.' I have no bird. I have no bush. God has taken my bird and my bush."

Unconvinced, Grace replies, "Oh, I see, so God's picking on you? Is that what you're saying?"

"No, he is ignoring me completely. He's far too busy giving Evan everything he wants."

At this point, Grace becomes irritated: **"You know, it's enough, all right? Will you just stop being such a martyr?"**

"I am not being a martyr. I am a victim. God is a mean kid sitting on an anthill with a magnifying glass, and I am the ant. God could have fixed my life in five minutes if he had wanted to, but he'd rather burn off my feelers and watch me squirm."

Encouragingly, Grace says: **"Sweetheart, I know you're mad. It's understandable. What Evan did is slimy and wrong, but this day could've been so much worse. I'm just glad you're okay."**

Bruce erupts, **"Okay? News flash! I'm not okay. I'm not okay with a mediocre job! I'm not okay with a mediocre apartment! I'm not okay with a mediocre life!"**

Now Grace is hurt. **"So is that what you think we have? A mediocre life?"**

"Perfect. Perfect," Bruce responds, **"I'll have the worst day of my life with a side order of guilt, please!"** Bruce walks out of the apartment slamming the door behind him.

If there ever was a passage of Scripture that Jim Carrey needed the day his world caved in on him, Psalm 115, is one of those. In Psalm 115, God's people are being scorned by people around them who keep asking them, **"Where is your God?"** *"Your nation is a mess...where is this God you say you worship?"*

Psalm 115 is God's answer to that question. And that's what I would like to speak to you about this morning.

Title: "Where is Your God?"

(Prayer)

I will never forget the words of Pastor Al Meredith of Fort Worth the day after a gunman invaded his church (Wedgewood Baptist) on Wednesday night Sept 15, 1999 and killed seven of his church members. After being up all night long, Pastor Meredith stood before reporters and said:

At times like this, when I'm asked, "Why? Where was God when all this happened" The only thing I can say--- "He's right where He was when His own dear Son died on Calvary's cross. And He weeps with those who weep; He grieves with those who grieve. His heart is as broken as ours is. He knows what it's like to lose a son. He's here."

Psalm 115 tells us where God is, especially when the problems and tragedies of life make people around you ask, "Where is your God?"

And this morning, I'd like to share three ways we can answer that question.

In the midst of turmoil...

1. **He is among His people, faithfully caring for them!**

¹ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
But to Your name give glory,
Because of Your **mercy**, [loyal love]
Because of Your **truth**. [faithfulness]

² Why should the Gentiles say, "So where is their God?"

The Psalmist is saying, *"If the skeptics and critics around us only knew what a loyal and faithful God You are—that You are there for us even when circumstances are awful—maybe they would stop asking: "Where is your God."*

We need to give them reasons for the hope we have as followers of Christ!

1 Peter 3:15-----...always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with humility and respect...

When others ask, "Where is your God?" tell them that:

He is among His people, faithfully caring for them!

2. He is above His people, powerfully ruling over them!

³ But our God *is* in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. [= He is sovereign!]

⁴ Their idols *are* silver and gold, The work of men's hands.

⁵ They have mouths, but they do not speak;

Eyes they have, but they do not see;

⁶ They have ears, but they do not hear;

Noses they have, but they do not smell;

⁷ They have hands, but they do not handle;

Feet they have, but they do not walk;

Nor do they mutter through their throat.

⁸ Those who make them are like them; [= **powerless**] So is everyone who trusts in them.

Theologian Christopher Wright said the following about idols:

"The worst thing about idols, as the Hebrew scriptures so tirelessly point out, is that they are utterly useless when you need them most."

Author J. R. Vassar wrote:

One day we were prayer walking through a large Buddhist temple, when I witnessed something heartbreaking. A large number of people, very poor and desperate, were bowing down to a large golden Buddha. They were stuffing what seemed to be the last of their money into the treasury box and kneeling in prayer, hoping to secure a blessing from the Buddha. On the other side of the large golden idol, scaffolding had been built. The Buddha had begun to deteriorate, and a group of workers were diligently repairing the broken Buddha. I took in the scene. Broken people were bowing down to a broken Buddha asking the broken Buddha to fix their broken lives while someone else fixed the broken Buddha.

Heartbreaking! Humans trusting in a broken-down statue to rescue them in the midst of their broken lives!

Don't trust in people, places or things --- they will let you down. Trust in the sovereign God—the powerful One who is **above** His people and rules and sustains the entire universe!

So when people ask: "Where is your God?"

1--- He is **among** His people, faithfully caring for them!

2--- He is **above** His people, powerfully ruling over them!

3. He is around His people, devotedly protecting them.

⁹ O Israel, trust in the LORD; He *is* their help and their shield.

¹⁰ O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; He *is* their help and their shield.

¹¹ You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He *is* their help and their shield.

The Psalmist calls Israel (3X!!!) to **trust in the Lord** rather than idols because only He can help and protect them.

God is devoted to helping and protecting those who cry out to Him and trust in Him!

Do you know what's good to know?

When your **friends** let you down, GOD IS THERE!

When your **family** lets you down, GOD IS THERE!

When you **job** gets to you, GOD IS THERE!

When **life** deals you a heavy blow, GOD IS THERE!

When you feel **all alone**, GOD IS THERE!

His name is Jehovah-Shammah—GOD IS THERE!

And that's why the Psalmist can tell Israel: (notice v. 12):

¹² The LORD has been [past tense] mindful of *us*;

He will **ble^ss** us;

He will **ble^ss** the house of Israel;

He will **ble^ss** the house of Aaron.

¹³ He will **ble^ss** those who fear the LORD, both small and great.

¹⁴ May the LORD give you increase more and more, You and your children.

¹⁵ May you *be* **ble^ss^ed** by the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.

So when people ask you, “Where is your God?” here’s what you can tell them:

He's above me:

Joshua 2:11-----...the LORD your God, **He is God in heaven above...**

He's around me:

Psalms 125:2-----As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so **the Lord surrounds His people...**

He's in front of me:

Deuteronomy 31:8-----And the LORD, He is the One **who goes before you...**

He's behind me:

Psalms 139:5-----You go before me **and follow me.**

He's under me:

Deuteronomy 33:27-----The eternal God *is* your refuge, and **underneath** are the everlasting arms...

He's with me:

Isaiah 41:10-----Fear not, **for I am with you**...

He's beside me:

Psalms 16:8--- Because **He is at my right hand** I shall not be shaken.

He's within me:

Colossians 1:27----- ...the glory of this mystery...which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.

Years ago a young man from Chicago went down **to the bluegrass regions of Kentucky** where he met a young woman who ultimately came back to Chicago as his bride. They enjoyed three lovely years of marriage, but one day in the midst of a sickness in a seizure of pain the young woman lost her mind. When she was at her best, she was a bit demented. At her worst, she would scream, and neighbors complained because the screams cut the air and it was hard to live with.

And so the young businessman left his home in the middle of Chicago, **went out to one of the western suburbs**, built a house, determined that there he would try to nurse his wife back to health and sanity again. One day the family physician suggested that if he were to take his wife back to her Kentucky home that maybe something in those familiar surroundings would help restore her sanity, and **so they went back to the old homestead**. Hand in hand they walked through the old house where memories hung on every corner. They went down to the garden and walked down by the riverside where the first violets were in bloom. But after several days nothing seemed to happen.

So, defeated and discouraged, the young man put his wife back in the car, and they headed back to Chicago. When they got close to the house, he looked over and discovered that his wife was asleep. It was the first deep, restful sleep she had had in many weeks. When he got to the house, he lifted her from the car, took her inside, placed her on the bed, and realized she wanted to sleep some more. So he placed a cover over her and then just sat by her side and watched her **until the first rays of the sun reached** through the curtain and touched her face. The young woman awoke, and she saw her husband seated by her side. She said, "I seem to have been on a long journey. Where have you been?" And that man, speaking out of weeks and months of patient waiting and watching said, "My love, I've been right here waiting for you all this time."

And my friends, when the day comes in the midst of maybe the most difficult time of your life and someone asks: "Where is your God?" you can answer them in the same way. He's right here. He is "God with us!"

(Scripture for unsaved---Nicodemus)

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16