

**Sunday Sermon 080623**  
**Genesis 32:22-32, 2 Timothy 3:16-17**

**Where Do You Meet the Living God?**

What are some things that you cannot live without? Your computer? Your smart phone? Golf? Ah! I know! Your snow shovels! Now, how many people would say that you cannot live without this? (Lift a Bible.) Think about this question and be honest with yourself: Could you live without the Bible? If many Christians were honest, the answer would probably be yes," because many of them already are.

Today I want to talk about the Bible, the role it plays, and the role it should play in our lives. Now, I am not going to address the authenticity of the Bible; I am going to assume that all of us as children of God believe that the words in the Bible represent the truth and are the words of God Himself.

I will begin with an illustration. Have any of you ever played with Legos or seen some of your children playing with Legos? They are the blocks that you can put together to make certain structures. Some of them are very complicated and consist of many pieces. There is a Lego set of the Taj Mahal, and it has 5,922 pieces! What do you think you will need in order to complete a structure made of 5,922 pieces? That's right! An instruction manual! We would be lost without an instruction manual, and I am pretty sure I would just give up.

The universe we live in feels like the Lego of God, the Creator. God in all his grace, mercy, and wisdom, knew that humans, in their sinful nature, would try to live their lives according to their own desires, so he gave us an instruction manual, including a description of Himself, our creator, and how we should live our lives.

The most important reason we should read the Bible is so that we can come to know who God is and His character. Our desire to read the Bible and how much we read it is a direct reflection of how much we desire God and desire to know Him. How important is it that we read the Word?

The Bible makes several references to paying attention to the word of God. In John 6:35, Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. Those who come to me will never be hungry; those who believe in me will never be thirsty." In Matthew 4:4, the scripture says, "Human beings cannot live on bread alone, but need every word that God speaks." In Deuteronomy 8:3, the scripture says, "He made you go

hungry, and then he gave you manna to eat, food that you and your ancestors had never eaten before. He did this to teach you that you must not depend on bread alone to sustain you, but on everything that the Lord says.”

In each of these passages, God makes a reference to food. Food is something we all need to survive. What is the longest you have ever gone without food? One time I put a little salt in my mouth to gargle while fasting, and I think it tasted better than the filet mignon dinner. Jesus even went 40 days without food! Can you imagine doing that? However, God and Jesus both declare that more than food, you need the word of God. America is the most well-fed nation in the world, but I fear that we are starving in spirit because we do not read God’s word.

What is it that keeps us from reading God’s word as Christians? One of the main reasons is that I am preoccupied with the things of this Earth. As long as we live in the world, it is permissible to be interested in worldly things and to strive for them. But if that is all that we eat, we will be very unhealthy! There is a reason why Jesus said that man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Because when we know and read the words of God, we can meet God.

Why is meeting God important? First, to find out why, let us take a look at Jacob. I’m sure that all of you are familiar with the story of Jacob and how he stole the blessing of the firstborn from his brother, Esau. Esau was so angry that he even wanted to kill Jacob, so you can imagine that Jacob was not in a rush to see his brother again. In fact, twenty years have passed since Jacob saw Esau again.

Jacob had already selected valuable items from his possessions and presented them to Esau, but still, because of his realization of his sinful nature, guilt, and fear, he could not come to meet his brother again. He knew that only God could help him and was waiting for a sign from God, a blessing, or permission to go forth. And then something amazing happened.

Jacob had left him alone that night. He did not start any prayer or supplication or call for an invitation to God. However, someone came up to Jacob, and they began to wrestle. I’d like to ask you to concentrate on the fact that "a man came in advance and wrestled with him." Who was that person? Of course, that is the

one question raised first, but more important, our concern should be, "Why did the person come to Jacob?" For the blessing! The person came to Jacob in order to bless him. I believe that person was Jesus. Jacob named the place where he faced Jesus Peniel, which means "face of God," after he realized he came face to face with God. It was after this meeting with God that Jacob's sinful nature was broken by God's love, and he was able to meet with his brother after 20 years.

The same applies to us. It is when we meet God and come to know Him that we can grasp an understanding of how much he loves us. After we come to this realization, it is inevitable that we fall in love with Him, and our actions and lives change as a result. Like Jacob, who met God, we want to meet Him and be filled with the power and courage to do His commands. And we want our perception of what is truly important in our lives to change with God's. It is important to note that Jacob was approached by God and that, as a result of this interaction, Jacob's bondage of sin and guilt was broken. God presenting himself to people in human form is not common. So how can we expect to have such a life-altering experience as Jacob did? Romans 1:20 says, "Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made. So those people have no excuse at all!"

God's holy nature is present in all of us. That is why people become compelled by the Holy Spirit to act in a certain way, even those who do not believe! That is why some non-believers feel compelled to read the Bible. The Holy Spirit speaks to all of God's creations, whether they believe in Him or not.

However, the fact that the Holy Spirit speaks to us does not mean that we always listen. We must choose to obey God! That is what Jacob did, and he became Israel and was welcomed by Esau, who wanted to kill him, with open arms.

The second concept of the Bible I want to share with you is that "the Bible was written for my sake." The Bible was not written for God's satisfaction by giving warnings and instructions to human beings.

The Bible is the manual that was written to lead us down the path of salvation and prosperity. Please listen to this scripture again from 2 Tim. 3:15–17, which says "15 The Holy Scriptures are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, 17 so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed."

Wouldn't it be that we endlessly want to transform into these beings? Through His Word, God helps us and guides us to become that way. Leo Tolstoy said, "God does not exist to those who do not long to see Him. Seek Him, then God will appear to you."

# I have a brother who is 5 years older than me. It was one winter morning when I was a 1<sup>st</sup> grader. My mom prepared steamed rice and dried green radish soup for breakfast. It doesn't sound very good, does it? Well, it wasn't. But this was a common meal for us at that time. Our family of nine was gathered around the table, and my father asked my older brother, "What is the most delicious food in the world?" My brother replied, "Father, it is dried green radish soup." I'm certain. Any parent would have been moved by my brother's response.

But right after my brother answered, I said, "Father, it is the word of God." At that age, I had no real knowledge or belief, nor had I tasted the word of God. I just repeated what I had heard sometimes at home and at Sunday school. That morning, I felt that was the answer my father was looking for. My father was very satisfied with my answer. However, I felt sorry for my older brother. I think I turned his very humble and amazing answer into something forgotten by my own answer. Thankfully, my brother retired after serving over 20 years as a lay elder who loved the word of God at our home church in Korea.

I pray that every single person here at Wrightwood Community UMC is thirsty for God's word and to see his face. I pray that we become a nation and a world that seek God's face and come to the realization that His words are more important than anything else on this Earth.

Do not despair when God seems to be silent. Cross over that obstacle with the instructions of the words. If you do not trust the Bible, the devil will try to push you again and again not to believe it. However, if you believe and obey God, the devil will lose and yield his power, so your belief will become even stronger.

Today, I bless you with the opportunity to meet our loving God through the Bible, the word of God!

### **Reflect and Apply for Today's Sermon:**

1. What does the Bible mean to you?

Confirm that the living God is speaking to you through the Bible today.

What is your favorite Bible verse?

How do you feel when you recall that verse?

3. First, find out in the Bible how Heavenly Father answers your prayers. God uses both supernatural and rational methods at will.