

TRUST IN THE LIVING GOD

(No. 1231 – 1/23/23 – Sermon Online Zoom)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. God is called the “living God” close to 30 times in Scripture:

1. **Deut. 5:26:** [Israelites at Mt. Sinai]: *For what mortal man has ever heard the **voice of the living God** speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived?*
2. **1 Sam. 17:26, 36:** ²⁶*David asked the men standing near him, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the **armies of the living God**?” ...³⁶*Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the **living God**.”**
3. **Mat. 16:15-16:** ¹⁵*“But what about you?” He asked. “Who do you say I am?”* ¹⁶*Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the **Son of the living God**.”*
4. **1 Tim. 3:15:** *If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the **church of the living God**, the pillar and foundation of the truth.*
5. **Heb. 10:31:** *It is a dreadful thing to fall into the **hands of the living God**.*
6. **Heb 12:22:** *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the **city of the living God**. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,*

B. The living God is often contrasted with dead, useless idols:

1. **Jer. 10:7-11:** ⁷*Who should not revere You, O King of the nations? This is Your due. Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like You. ⁸They are all senseless and foolish; they are taught by **worthless wooden idols**. ⁹Hammered silver is brought from Tarshish and gold from Uphaz. What the craftsman and goldsmith have made is then dressed in blue and purple— all made by skilled workers. ¹⁰But the LORD is the true*

God; **He is the living God**, the eternal King. When He is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure His wrath. ¹¹Tell them this: “**These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth**, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.”

2. **Jonah 2:8** (Pastor Tom’s message):
 - a) KJV: They that **observe lying vanities** forsake their own mercy.
 - b) NIV: Those who **cling to worthless idols** forfeit the grace that could be theirs.
3. **Acts 14:13-15** [In Lystra]: ¹³The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. ¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: ¹⁵“Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to **turn from these worthless things to the living God**, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them.”
4. **2 Cor. 6:16**: What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the **temple of the living God**. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people.”

II. IDOLS OR THE LIVING GOD

- A. **Ps. 115:1-11**: ¹Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to Your name be the glory, because of Your love and faithfulness. ²Why do the nations say, “Where is their God?” ³Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him. ⁴But **their idols** are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. ⁵They have mouths, but **cannot speak**, eyes, but they **cannot see**; ⁶they have ears, but **cannot hear**, noses, but they **cannot smell**; ⁷they have hands, but **cannot feel**, feet, but they **cannot walk**; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. ⁸Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them. ⁹O house of Israel, **trust in the LORD—He is their help and shield**. ¹⁰O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD—He is their help and shield. ¹¹You who fear Him, trust in the LORD—He is their help and shield.

- B. Likely written after Israel’s return from Babylonian captivity (for idolatry!)—they seem to have learned some important lessons
1. All glory belongs to God!
 2. Because of His love and faithfulness!
 3. The nations were taunting them, saying, “Where is your God?” They knew the answer: “Our God is in heaven, and He does whatever He pleases!”
 4. They ridiculed their idols, pointing out that they cannot speak, see, hear, smell, feel, walk, or do anything!
 5. Those who trust in them will be like them
- C. Modern idolatry
1. An idol is something people worship or trust in—it takes the place of God (God can only occupy one place in our lives: NUMBER ONE!)
 2. Idols take many forms—statues resembling elephants, monkeys, and even rats in India (20,000 black rats in Rajahstan's Karni Mata) and Buddha in Sri Lanka, etc.
 3. Our idols in the U.S. are often more sophisticated—things like money, music & sports idols—but our #1 idol is still SELF! This is the “selfie generation.”

III. THE IDOLS CANNOT... BUT OUR GOD CAN!

- A. Idols have mouths, but cannot speak... our **God can speak!**
1. God said... (creation! He breathed out 1 septillion stars!)
 2. **Ps. 29:2-10:** ²*Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; worship the LORD in the splendor of His holiness. ³The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters. ⁴The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic. ⁵The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. ⁶He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox. ⁷The voice of the LORD strikes with flashes of lightning. ⁸The voice of the LORD shakes the desert; the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh. ⁹The voice of the LORD twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in*

His temple all cry, "Glory!" ¹⁰**The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever.**

3. **Mat. 8:5-8:** ⁵When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, asking for help. ⁶"Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering." ⁷Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him." ⁸The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have You come under my roof. But **just say the word**, and my servant will be healed."
4. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice; be like Samuel and pray, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

B. The idols have eyes, but cannot see... our **God can see!**

1. **Prov. 15:3:** *The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.* [not good if you're trying to hide like Adam & Eve!]
2. David tried hiding from the Lord, but found He is everywhere and He has "night vision"

Ps. 139:1-12: ¹O LORD, You have searched me and **You know me.** ²You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. ³You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. ⁴Before a word is on my tongue You know it completely, O LORD. ⁵You hem me in—behind and before; **You have laid Your hand upon me.** ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. ⁷**Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence?** ⁸If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there... ¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," ¹²**even the darkness will not be dark to You; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to You.**

3. What we really long for is the assurance that God sees us—that He knows what we're going through; the story of Hagar demonstrates this. Sarah had mistreated her servant Hagar, so Hagar fled into the desert. There, she had an encounter with the angel of the LORD who gave her comfort and assurance:

Gen. 16:10-14: ¹⁰"I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count." ¹¹The angel of the

LORD also said to her: “You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for **the LORD has heard of your misery...**”¹³ She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: “You are **the God who sees me,**” for she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me.”¹⁴ That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

4. We want God to watch over us:

Ps. 121:1-8: ¹I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? ²My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. ³He will not let your foot slip— **He who watches over you will not slumber;** ⁴indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. ⁵The LORD **watches over you**—the LORD is your shade at your right hand; ⁶the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. ⁷The LORD will keep you from all harm— **He will watch over your life;** ⁸the LORD will **watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.**

- C. The idols have ears, but cannot hear... our **God can hear!**

1. **Ex. 2:23-25:** ²³During that **long period**, the king of Egypt died. The **Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out**, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴**God heard** their groaning and He remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them. [God was already at work—baby Moses, Israel’s future deliverer, had been adopted right into the house of Pharaoh’s daughter, grown up, and fled to Midian!]
2. **Ps. 34:6, 17:** ⁶This poor man called, and **the LORD heard him;** He saved him out of all his troubles...¹⁷The righteous cry out, and **the LORD hears them;** He delivers them from all their troubles.
3. **1 John 5:14-15:** ¹⁴This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, **He hears us.** ¹⁵And if we know that **He hears us**—whatever we ask—we know that **we have what we asked of Him.**
4. **Ps. 61:1-2:** ¹**Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.** ²**From the ends of the earth I call to You, I call as my**

heart grows faint [“is overwhelmed” KJV]; *lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

5. Testimony of Pedro in Juarez, Mexico
6. God also hears the taunts and blasphemy of His enemies:

Isa. 37:21-36: ²¹*Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: **Because you have prayed to Me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria,** ²²this is the word the LORD has spoken against him: ... ²³Who is it you have insulted and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes in pride? Against the Holy One of Israel! ... ²⁸But I know where you stay and when you come and go and how you rage against Me. ²⁹Because you rage against Me and **because your insolence has reached My ears,** I will put My hook in your nose and My bit in your mouth, and I will make you return by the way you came...”* ³³*Therefore this is what the LORD says concerning the king of Assyria: “He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it. ³⁴By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city,” declares the LORD. ³⁵“I will defend this city and save it, for My sake and for the sake of David My servant!”* ³⁶*Then the **angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp.** When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!*

- D. The idols have hands, but cannot feel or do anything... our **God has powerful hands that work!**

1. **Ex. 15:6:** *Your right hand, O LORD, was **majestic in power.** Your right hand, O LORD, **shattered the enemy.***
2. **Deut. 4:34:** *Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a **mighty hand** and an **outstretched arm,** or by great and **awesome deeds,** like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?*
3. **Josh. 4:23-24:** ²³*For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan just what He had done to the*

Red Sea when He dried it up before us until we had crossed over. ²⁴He did this **so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.**

4. **Ps. 8:3-6:** ³When I consider **Your heavens, the work of Your fingers**, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, ⁴what is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him? ⁵You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶You made him ruler **over the works of Your hands**; You put everything under his feet.
5. **Isa. 48:12-13:** ¹²Listen to Me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am He; I am the first and I am the last. ¹³**My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens**; when I summon them, they all stand up together.
6. **Ezra 7:6, 9:** ⁶This Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, **for the hand of the LORD his God was on him...** ⁹He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, **for the gracious hand of his God was on him.**
7. **Isa. 41:10:** So, do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; **I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.**
8. **John 10:28-29:** ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; **no one can snatch them out of My hand.** ²⁹My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; **no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand.**
9. **Luke 11:19-20:** ¹⁹Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁰But if **I drive out demons by the finger of God**, then the kingdom of God has come to you.
10. **Acts 4:30-31:** ³⁰**“Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.”** ³¹After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all

filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

11. **Acts 11:19-21:** ¹⁹*Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. ²⁰Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹**The Lord's hand was with them**, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.*
12. **Acts 13:6-12:** ⁶*They traveled... to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, ⁷who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. ⁸But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. ⁹Then Saul, who was also called **Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit**, looked straight at Elymas and said, ¹⁰“You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? ¹¹Now **the hand of the Lord is against you**. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.” Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²**When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed**, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.*

E. Idols have feet, but cannot walk... our **God can walk and move!**

1. **Deut. 33:26:** *There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who **rides on the heavens to help you** and on the clouds in His majesty.*
2. **Ps. 18:3-10:** ³*I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. ⁴The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. ⁵The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. ⁶In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From His temple **He heard my voice; my cry came before Him, into His ears.** ⁷The earth*

trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because He was angry. ⁸Smoke rose from His nostrils; consuming fire came from His mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. ⁹**He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under His feet. ¹⁰He mounted the cherubim and flew; He soared on the wings of the wind.**

3. **Eph. 1:19-23:** ¹⁹His incomparably great power for us who believe... That power is like the working of His mighty strength, ²⁰which He exerted in Christ when He raised him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²²And **God placed all things under His feet** and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.
4. **Rev. 2:18:** To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the **Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.**

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Our God is a living God... He speaks, hears, sees, works, moves! He has a mouth, ears, eyes, hands, and feet!
- B. **Ps. 115:1-11:** ¹Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to Your name be the glory, because of Your love and faithfulness. ²Why do the nations say, "Where is their God?" ³Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him. ⁴But **their idols** are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. ⁵They have mouths, but **cannot speak**, eyes, but they **cannot see**; ⁶they have ears, but **cannot hear**, noses, but they **cannot smell**; ⁷they have hands, but **cannot feel**, feet, but they **cannot walk**; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. ⁸**Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.** ⁹O house of Israel, **trust in the LORD—He is their help and shield.** ¹⁰O house of Aaron, **trust in the LORD—He is their help and shield.** ¹¹You who fear Him, **trust in the LORD—He is their help and shield.**
- C. **Trust in the Lord**, not in the idols of this world
- D. Don't forfeit the grace and mercy that God has waiting for you!