

Experiencing the Story – July 23rd, 2023

God's Presence Brings Peace

1. Review Series

- a. Seeking Peace Together
- b. Peace with Creation, Peace with Others, and *now* Peace with God
- c. Today we are talking about how God's presence, God being with us, brings us peace.

2. Talk about Psalm 139 & God's Presence brings Peace

- a. Before we might start talking about how God might be present with us, we're going to start with a few little games: sitting or standing, thinking thoughts, hide and seek, whisper nice word.
- b. Now, if you want to be find out if someone is sitting or standing, how do you go about doing that? What about if you want to know what their thinking? What about if you want to know where someone went walking? What about if you want to know what someone is saying?
- c. Now, do you think that if God wants to be with _____, that God needs to walk over to them? No, so God being present with _____ doesn't require a lot of movement from God. God is Spirit and so God can be with us anywhere!
- d. That can be a little strange in a way, right? If any one of us would constantly be watching you or be beside you and give you no personal space and know your every thought and always know what you were going to say, that would not feel very comfortable, would it? Sometimes we say: "Give me some space," and you know, I think God gives us space too. But with God things are also a bit different, aren't they? Because God, the bible teaches us, isn't really ever taking up our personal space but is actually creating space for us to grow and learn and God is holding us with love so that no matter where we go in life, we can be at peace.

3. So, now I want to talk a bit about finding peace in God's presence

- a. Are any of you going on holidays?
- b. Moving?
- c. Or maybe some of you feel like you are wandering during the summer, not sure what your schedule looks like now that school is out – maybe you have been feeling not at peace (sometimes disruption of our routines can make us feel “off”).
- d. This Psalm wants to remind us that God is with us in all of these circumstances, whether they bring super fantastic and fun times or if they bring us sad and difficult times.

4. Prayer

- a. Pray with me: God, thank you that you are always present with us, in the good times and in the bad times, and that we can find true peace in you. AMEN

5. Eating to Remember God's Presence

- a. Psalm 139 has a word hiding in it that is actually really funny – at one point, the Psalmist is talking to God about how God has always been present in their life, and they say to God: “You created my innermost parts,” but the word in the Hebrew language is literally “You created my kidneys.” – an important organ in your body that helps cleanse your blood and rid your body of toxins.
- b. So, to remind us of God's presence with us always and the peace that God brings us, we will now share some roasted, seasoned *Kidney Beans*!