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**Lesson 2 | April 23rd, 2023 | “There Are Many Ways into God’s Presence”**

**Introduction & Aiken Ministry Updates**

**We Gather Together:** (*Selected verses from Ephesians 2 )*

Pastor: As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins

**Group: Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.**

P: But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5**made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions

**G: it is by grace you have been saved**

P: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God

**G: not by works, so that no one can boast.**

P: For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,

**G: which God prepared in advance for us to do.**

**Opening Prayer**

**Schedule for Our Study | “10 Lies About God”**

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| **April 23rd**  | **There are Many Ways into God’s Presence**  |
| April 30th  | God Has Grown Soft on Sin |
| May 7th  | God Helps Those Who Help Themselves |
| *May 14th*  | *Confirmation Sunday (Cake Reception)*  |
| *May 21st*  | *Congregational & Voter’s (CV) Meeting*  |
| May 28th  | God Has Made Death a Natural Part of Life  |
| June 4th  | God is Distant and Disinterested in What Happens  |
| *Break for Summer... August 20th Fall Kick-Off* |

**Introductory Activity**

Former night talk show host Jay Leno often went out onto the street and asked people random questions. He called the segment “Jaywalking.” Imagine that you are stepping out onto the streets and asking a cross-section of Americans, “Describe God and who he is to you.” With your group, list at least three things people might say. (2 min)

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 *Can all of these responses describe the same God?*

 *As a Christian, who is God to you?*

 *What is the only way to God?*

**God is...**

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| **Isaiah 6:1-5 -** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. **2**Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. **3**And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” **4**At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. **5**“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” |

1. God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* How did being in the presence of God effect Isaiah?
	+ Why?
	+ Would it have affected you in the same way?
	+ (1 min. with a partner) Agree or disagree? *In the Old Testament, the people were terrified being in the presence of God’s holiness. In the NT church, we are less likely to be terrified of God’s presence.*

**Can I Be “Good Enough” or “Try My Hardest” to Approach a Holy God?**

1. Yes or no? Why or why not?

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| **Exodus 33:12-20: 12**Moses said to the Lord, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’ **13**If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.” **14**The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” **15**Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. **16**How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?” **17**And the Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.” **18**Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.” **19**And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. **20**But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.” |

1. Even Moses, God’s servant leading his Israelite people, wasn’t allowed to see God and live. Why?
* In Romans 6:23 we read, “The wages of sin is death.”How would you explain to someone why even one sin merits death?
* There’s something vital that is missing here..... What is it?

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| **Romans 3:24-25: ...** and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. **25**God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness**Romans 5:1:** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. |

1. While I cannot, as a sinner, approach a Holy God, what is the only way I can be at peace with him?

**We Need a Mediator!**

1. Our way to God is through a mediator. What is that in your own words?

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| **1 John 2:2 –** He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.**John 3:16 *–*** “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, **that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life***.*”**Mark 16:16 *–*** “Whoever **believes and is baptized will be saved**, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”**2 Corinthians 5:21:** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. |

**How Can Someone Come to Faith in Jesus?**

1. Faith happens through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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| **Ephesians 2:8** - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves*,* it is the gift of God.**John 15:16 –** [Jesus said], “You did not choose me, but I chose you.”**1 Corinthians 12:3** - No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.**Romans 10:17 – Faith comes from hearing the message**, and the message is heard **through the word of Christ**.**2 Thessalonians 2:13,14** - But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our **gospel**, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. |

**Closing Discussions**

* What is the different between Christianity and every other world religion?
* On the basis of our study, how would you respond to the statement: “There are many paths into God’s presence”?
* Take 1 minute to come up with a bumper sticker slogan illustrating that Jesus is the only way to God

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**Closing Prayer**