

## Ocean

Today we are starting a summer series called “Nature Declares the Glory of God”. Interestingly enough I mapped out this series in the fall to be preached this summer and I did that because I normally preach topical in the summer and I also wanted to preach this series after we got those great 4k TV’s so I could show high quality pictures of everything I was preaching about.

Now that we are limited to outdoor services I thought... wow I guess we will experience nature while we hear about nature.

The main concept of this sermon series is to look at what the Scriptures say about nature and various creations and learn how God intended these creations to bring glory to Himself and point to Him. I believe the Scriptures teach that in creation we not only see there is a creator but we can learn about character traits of the creator and how He deals with us.

Let me give you as disclaimer...I am not promoting “Pantheism” which basically says the universe is God, these are people that say things like “the universe went

my way in this situation” or “the universe is looking after me”. They essentially worship creation.

We are “monotheists” which means we believe there is One True God. God created everything and also gave us His Word and His Word explicitly states that He is the creator and through His creation we can learn more about Him... *Psalm 19:1 “The heavens (creation) declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”*

This is called “General Revelation” which we learned about during our “Learning and Growing in Crisis” online sermon series.

So today we are going to learn about my favorite and the most vast of God’s creations on this earth and that is...The Ocean.

Most of you that know me well, know why my favorite creation is the Ocean...because ocean has waves and I spent much of the last 32 years of life riding waves, chasing waves, talking about waves and watching videos of people riding waves.

As I was planning this I thought “I wonder how much time I spent in the ocean?” I did the best I could to average out how much time I spent in the ocean in 32 years and the amount of hours is just under 10 thousand hours...needless to say...I like the ocean.

Before you judge me for that excessive amount of time...I have about 6x times that number in ministry and study of the Word.

Many of the things we know about the Ocean were discovered by Oceanographers, marine biologists and people that navigate, work around and love the ocean. So in view of that we will use THAT information and look at what the Scriptures have to say about how the things we learn about the Ocean bring glory to God.

The first thing we learn is...

### **The Ocean is Mysterious**

*Ecclesiastes 1:7 All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.*

This was written by Solomon who was very wise and wealthy and this statement was not a statement of confusion it was statement that is reminding us that about the mysteriousness of God's creation, namely the Ocean.

Here a are few mysteries that I came across this week. Most of the oxygen in our atmosphere comes from tiny marine plants in the ocean—phyto-plankton, kelp, and algal plankton. Scientists estimate they're responsible for around 70 percent of the atmosphere's oxygen, according to National Geographic.

According to a 2011 study...so little of the oceans have been explored, it is currently estimated that 91 percent of the species that exist under the sea have yet to be discovered.

The ocean is mysterious because there are things we do not know and things that are being discovered all the time.

You have heard people say “God works in mysterious ways” which is not a Bible verse but people say this

because we do not fully understand all the things that God does or allows.

Even though that is not a Bible verse it is true and probably based on Romans 11:33-36.

Romans 11:33-36 *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that He might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

Some people do not like that fact that we can't fully understand God....Some will criticize what they don't understand...Bob Dylan said don't do that.

I think the wise Biblical conclusion to come to is...If we could fully understand the things of God He would not be a God that is worthy of giving glory and praise to. That passage asks rhetorically *“For who has known the mind of the Lord?”*

So now when you go and look at the ocean think about how much is going on under the surface and how you can't even comprehend the mysteries that lie beneath and then think about the God we worship and serve and how we can't fully understand or comprehend what He is doing in each and every situation we find ourselves in.

But we are capable of understanding the most important thing we need to understand about God and that is the depth of His love for us.

Which brings us to the next thing about the ocean and that is...

### **The Ocean is Deep**

Now when I say the ocean is deep most of you think yeah it is deep tell me something I don't know. But did you know there is a trench in the western Pacific east of the Philippines called the Mariana Trench that is 35,802 feet deep, it is the deepest point on the planet, the water pressure is eight tons per square inch. If you went to that depth, it would feel like you were under 50 jumbo jets.

In these deepest parts of the ocean, the water temperature may only be 35° degrees, with the exception of water coming out of hydrothermal vents in the seafloor. The water released from these vents can be up to 750°. It's the intense pressure at these depths—the same pressure that would crush you—that actually keeps the water from boiling.

There are two passages I want to point out when it comes to the topic of depth...the first is...

*Ephesians 3:14-19 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

Now in this passage which I will use again probably when we look at mountains, Paul is simply teaching the believers in Ephesus...be rooted and grounded in love

toward one another and that love should have no boundaries...width, length, height and depth. The example of that boundless love is Jesus, He showed it to us in the GOSPEL

But let me point out another verse about depth in regards to the ocean and the sin that Jesus forgave us of when we trusted Him.

*Micah 7:19 He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*

Think about what I said about the Mariana Trench and how going to that depth would be like being crushed by 50 jumbo jets....

That is what Jesus does with our sin...

That means it is gone, forgiven and crushed.

Maybe you have an issue with guilt and shame over your past sins...I think a good thing for you to do is take a drive and go look at the ocean and be reminded Jesus cast that sin into the depths of the sea.

The next thing we know about the ocean is

## **The Ocean is Powerful**

None of us will ever forget the impacts of Hurricane Sandy...one of the most iconic images was seeing the rollercoaster that used to sit on the end of Casino Pier in Seaside Heights sitting in the ocean. Seeing videos of the boardwalk being ripped up by waves as if it were a box of toothpicks being spilled. Driving around in the ocean front areas seeing houses literally knocked off their foundations...That was some power.

There are over 3 Million shipwrecks at the bottom of the ocean.

The tallest tsunami ever documented was 100 feet and was generated by an earthquake followed by a landslide in 1958 in Alaska's Lituya Bay. When the wave ran ashore, it snapped trees 1,700 feet upslope. That would be like a surge of water reaching the top of the Freedom Tower in NYC.

Thats insane...if any of you that have ever gotten pounded by a wave here on the Jersey shore while swimming, body boarding or surfing you have a small example of the power of the ocean.

Listen to what the Psalmist said about the comparison between the powerful ocean and God...

*Psalm 93:4* “*Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty!*” The psalmist is saying the power of the ocean is no comparison.

Knowing that God has that kind of power should do two things for us and these two things will bring Him glory...the first is put a sense of healthy fear and respect in us.

When we seek to sin against Him, seek to wrong another person or seek to marginalize people that He created think about the power He has...you should have a healthy fear and respect, when you have that it brings Glory to Him

The second thing it should do is comfort you. Maybe you are going through something right now that you are powerless against...Guess what? God isn't powerless against it...in fact He is so powerful that He can conquer it.

Do you believe that? I know sometimes it is hard to... and you are not alone others have been afraid and did not realize He has that type of power.

There is an account in Matthew 8:23-27 about Jesus displaying the power and in fact it was over the raging sea.

*And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. 24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." 26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"*

Jesus used His power to do what? Calm the storm, calm the sea...Have you ever witnessed the ocean when it is just calm? Like sheet of glass?

This brings me to the last thing I want to point out about the ocean and that is..

## **The Ocean can be Calming...**

Some of you have a hard time calming down...you are anxious, you have a hard time relaxing, you think you have control of things, you think you need control of things and your mind just keeps on going and going.

What do you do? ...*Psalm 46:10 says "Be still, and know that I am God"*

But how can you achieve that? I have good news for you God created something that will help you calm down when you look at it...its the ocean.

*According to an article by Dr Sally Nazari,*

*"The color blue has been found by an overwhelming amount of people to be associated with feelings of calm and peace, "Staring at the ocean actually changes our brain waves' frequency and puts us into a mild meditative state and the consistent ebbing and flowing you hear de-stimulates your brains," The sounds coupled with the visuals — activate your parasympathetic nervous system, which is "responsible for slowing us down and allowing us to relax and feel more engaged,"*

There are some days I go to the beach in the middle of the winter to surf and it is so calming a peaceful and some of those days I look down the beach both ways and don't see a single soul for miles. So peaceful and calming.

We live in amazing place where you can get in car today after service and in less than 30 minutes you can go stare at the ocean and allow the calming effect that God intended for you to experience when you look at His creation...when you do that give praise and thanks to Him because He deserves the glory.

Pray