



Glyfada Christian Center



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Series God's gifts

Service Sunday Service

Passages

Knowing God by His Names – The God who Sees

Pastor Gail – Welcome

1. It's so good to be in the house of the Lord. This morning, here in the building, there are Bibles all around the room, and we kind of encourage people to use the paper, Bibles. And if you wouldn't mind, Let's stand for the reading of the Word. We want to read from Psalms 33:1-4, "Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does."

2. Let us lift our voices together, and thank Him for the privilege of being together with the family of God today. Let's pray. Father, we give You glory and honor and praises. Who is like You Lord, there is absolutely no one... We love You Lord, in the name of Jesus.

3. Amen, Amen, Amen. Why don't you greet someone near you. Give them a big hug. And say, 'I'm glad you're here.' Everyone looks so wonderful. The Lord is good, Amen. Our guests are here this morning. Just now I was thinking, so often we call them special guests, but you know what, they're family, they have the same blood. I love that, that we can know people from all around the world and worship Him, Amen.

4. You may be seated for a moment please. We are very pleased to be here today. We want to make a few announcements. Praise God, it's always good to have announcements. Amen, it means that we are active. Yeah, that's good. I'm going to tell you from today, So that you don't forget. You can take your phones out for this moment only. Sunday 30th March, we roll our clocks forward. So please, put it in your calendar, so that you can remember. You lose an hour of sleep, so go to bed earlier.

5. You can follow our announcements on our WhatsApp page, and our GCC Facebook page. And we are really excited, I think it's next Friday and Saturday, we have a group of our young people, they're going to the youth conference in Thessaloniki, we're very, very excited about that.

6. Don't forget, we're in the season of Lent, where we remember the love of Jesus and how great was His giving His life for us. During holy week, we will be fasting together before we have the Lord's Supper, and feet washing. And don't forget, the Lord has still called us and said that this is the year of prayer. And so, the church from Tuesday to Friday at 10:00 is open for prayer. Please come and join for prayer time with the Lord.

7. Father, we thank you so much, that You are with us this morning. We want to take for just a moment, and pray for you if you are in the room, when you have a very special need, whether it's health or economics, or whatever situation it might be. Where you're seated will you just raise your hand. Lots of hands. Would you just agree with someone near you, take their hand or just say that I'm going to agree with you that the Lord hears this prayer this morning.

8. Oh, blessed Jesus, heavenly Father, Spirit of the living God, Holy Spirit, You're here in this room right now and we thank You as we pray this morning, God, the needs are great, but God, but You are the answer. One of Your names is 'I Am the God who answers, I Am the God who heals. I will never leave you nor forsake you. I can make a way where there seems to be no way. God, we pray right now, God, that You will bring the answers now, God, that so many need this morning. You are the answer God, we may not see it immediately, but God, You've already prepared the answer and we thank You God, we will trust in You to bring the answer, in the name of the Lord God almighty. Hallelujah, bless the Lord.

9. We're going to start this next cycle kind of slow and speed it up to what it normally is, but maybe while you're sitting there think about yourself for just a moment as we sing this song. Ask yourself, 'Is this me?'

10. But it's true – we want to bring an offering to the Lord today. Often, we know, we kind of need to give to the Lord, but we forget there's joy in it. Pastor Brian and I and Leto and Stavro, we've been really praying, for there to be joy in the house, that finally we're able to meet all the needs; joy in the house, Amen. He is the God of overflow. Stavro prays for the offering.

11. I'm excited today, most of you that come here regularly, this is your church, you know that we have a lot of miniseries flowing out of here. So, Michael is going to share a little this morning a little bit of what he's been doing.

Michael – Testimony

1. Good morning, it's been almost a year since we shared what we are experiencing and what we are doing here in Greece. And back then, we shared that we were having trouble finding our place and listening to what God has on His mind for us. For us as a family but also in terms of our ministry. Because a lot of ministries and colleagues of ours left or closed. And a lot of ministries experienced the same issues, people, workers leave.

2. But almost a year ago, God gave us a vision for a shared community for refugees, a place that is used by many Christian organizations. Five years ago, every ministry had its own community center to take care of refugees. But due to the changed situation, nobody could afford to run a center all week, because nobody had the stuff for it.

Mika Yrjola - Main Message

1. Beautiful. I am so happy to be with you today. I just Gail this past week to come; we would love to come and worship with you. But I'm honored for this opportunity to actually share with you this morning. Hopefully to encourage you. Even, just by saying that Jesus loves you. He loves you so much. There is nothing that He would not do, nothing, to reach you, to love you, to show His face to you.

2. My name is Mika, and Mika is fine for a title as well. I'm here with the world's most beautiful woman, my wife, Rommy. We have 6 children, because we obey the Bible. The Bible says, "Be fruitful and multiply." (Genesis 1:28). It was the first commandment that was given to man. Somebody say, Amen. And some people ask me, 'Do you really love children. You must really love children. Ah, well, they're OK. How come you have six then? Oho, I don't love children, I love my wife; and that's what happens.

3. I have a Finnish passport, but most of my life, I have lived outside of Finland. My grandfather left from Finland, 100 years ago, travelled through the Soviet Union, and became a missionary in China. So, my father grew up partially in China and afterwards when they were kicked out, they went to India and Sri Lanka.

4. My father went to school in India and Sri Lanka and so when we talk at home, we mix a lot of different languages, and a lot of different accents, and people ask us, 'Where are you guys from?' And I say, 'I don't know. But we're going to heaven.'

5. I was born in Singapore, I was raised in Indonesia, the first 12 years of my life, and so, I am what they call an egg. White on the outside, yellow on the inside. So, after I didn't know where I was from, I really struggled to find my place in the world. And together with my wife, we have pastored churches, in Australia, in Canada, in Finland for the last 10 years, But 2 years ago, the Lord moved us to the United States. It had to be God, because we were not looking to move, but I told God that He could do whatever He wants with my life. And that's

exactly what He seems to be doing. He does whatever He wants. And it's my part and it's your part to say yes Lord.

6. Well, I want to share with you what I think is my life's message. In the Bible, God reveals Himself through some of His names that He uses. It helps us to know what He is like. We know that He is Jehovah Jireh, (Genesis 22), He is our provider. He calls Himself, Jehovah Rafah (Exodus 15:26), He is our healer. He's El Shaddai (Genesis 17:1), He's El Elyon (Genesis 14:18-20).

7. There are so many names that He uses to reveal what He is like. Most of these names, were given by some important Jewish men. They were kings or prophets, leaders of nation, who had an encounter with God, and they read and wrote, 'This is what God is like.' And God agreed with that and put it in His Book (the Bible), so that thousands of years later, we could get to know what He is like.

8. All these names were given by important Jewish men. Except for one name. It was given by nobody important. It was given by a slave. It wasn't given by a man; it was given by a woman. It wasn't given by a Jew or a Hebrew. It was given by an Egyptian, an Egyptian slave woman, by the name of Hagar, who had an encounter with God. And after the encounter, she gives a name to God, and God says, 'Yes, that's who I AM. I'm going to put that in my Book. So that they would know thousands of years from now, that that's what I'm like.'

9. So, if you have your Bibles with you, I want to read from Genesis 16:6-14 "Your slave is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so, she fled from her." And I love the next few words, "The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going? "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered. Then the angel of the Lord told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." The angel added, "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count." The angel of the Lord also said to her: "You are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery. He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him,

and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." 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." That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered."

10. The name was given, is 'El Roi,' the God who sees. Given by a slave girl, who had been abused and mistreated, an immigrant, a foreigner in the land, had an encounter with God and says, 'This is what God is like. He's a God who sees.' Have you ever been in a situation, when you asked God, 'Hello, is there anybody up there? Can You see what I'm going through. Do You see where I am? Do You see my life?'

11. But there is another side to, 'the God who sees.' There are two sides. Because He is a God who sees, He sees, when we wish that nobody could see us. 'Oh, I hope nobody saw that. I scraped the car in the parking lot. I was driving too fast, and the police were outside. I hope they didn't see.' They may not have seen, but God sees.

12. Growing up in Asia, we actually lived on a ship. For the twelve years of my life, I was brought up on a ship. We went from island to island. We had a clinic on board and a Bible school, we were doing many things to help the public. We had services on board and we went to help the churches on land.

13. There was most of the time, we were deep in the jungle, up and down the rivers, where we were usually the only white people they had ever seen. So, we were like a tourist attraction. In Borneo, the world's biggest island, I was the Acropolis that people came to see. Living in the jungle, there were no stores around, we would buy meat from the hunters, my mother would bake bread. About once a month, my father would take a smaller boat and go down to the coast and buy all the supplies. And because it was the jungle and humid tropics, one thing that we never got, was ice cream. We didn't have a freezer, so, when I became an adult, anytime I see an ice cream, I put it around here (around my waist).

14. But there was always one thing I would ask my father to bring from the store, 'I would like Danish butter cookies.' I don't know if you've ever had some, but they had these tins, and they would have five or six different types of cookies in there. Two of the cookies, had sugar on top of them, and you would put them in your mouth, and it would melt in your mouth, and you would have this sugar all over your tongue, and it's just like it's going to be in heaven. Oh, the sweetness of those cookies. And so, usually my father would bring one tin, and my mother would allow me to eat a few of them, and then she'd always say. 'that's enough' and she would close the tin, and she would put it high up on top of the kitchen cupboards. And when she would go somewhere, I would look up above the kitchen cupboards, and I could hear them calling my name, 'Mika, there's sweetness.' And so, I would find a stool, and climb on the kitchen counter, and reach up there. I would be able to open the tin with my fingers and my hand would be in the tin, and I could feel, not see but feel, my mother's eyes on me. And I would look behind me, and there she was, a serious look on her face, my hand was in the tin, 'Mom I'm just counting how many are left.'

15. You know, sometimes we have a feeling that God is trying to catch us in the act of doing wrong. That He's a KGB agent, the secret police. And He's just waiting to be able to catch us. 'Aha! Stavros, I knew you were speeding on the road.' 'Aha! I saw you doing something wrong.'

16. When I grew up in Sunday School, that's what I actually thought God was like, that He was trying to catch me when I was doing wrong. They even had songs that said this. Huh, 'Oh be careful little child, what you see, be careful little child, what you see, for the Father up above is looking down, in love. Oh, be careful little child, what you see, where you go.'

17. And it took me a long time to understand, that my Father up in heaven, who knows everything about me, who sees everything about my life, knows everything I've done wrong, He is the God that loves me the most, and I don't need to be afraid of Him. I don't need to try to hide anything from Him, because He loves me. He loves you. You don't need to hide. His name is El Roi, the God who sees.

18. But then there's the other side. He sees you, when you think no one sees. And you wish someone would. Those silent tears late at night. Those situations with your daughter, that you feel you cannot share with anyone. And you're asking God, 'Do You see me?'

19. Let me share you, my testimony. I was twelve years of age, and the ship that we had been living on, was caught in a storm, in the Java sea. The storm took us, we didn't know where we were, but it started sinking somewhere in the middle of the night. My mother comes and wakes me up, my younger sister and my younger brother next to me, at 2:00 in the morning, and told us that the captain, my grandfather, had ordered all the staff to abandon ship.

20. So, I go outside and it is pitch-black dark, the engine room has been flooded with water. The front of the ship is in the air and the back of the ship is under water. The life-boat had been lowered, and we waited as each wave would bring up the life-boat next to the ship, one of us would jump in, or until my younger brother was handed in, until all 19 of us were there. And I watched as my home went down into the sea. And the thought crossed my mind, 'I wonder if this is so dark that God cannot, see? I wonder if anybody is awake in heaven?'

21. But I thought, 'When morning comes, we're bound to see some land.' My mother had always loved Jesus, so much, that she can't wait to see Jesus. She's always loved heaven. You know those kinds of people, maybe you're one of them. I can't wait to get to heaven! She was looking at the waves, she told us later, and when there was a big wave approaching our life-boat, she was wondering if this is the wave, that will take us to heaven. And this is what she thought, 'How wonderful it will be to walk on the streets of gold, hand-in-hand, the whole family, and go see Jesus.'

22. When you love Jesus, death is not a problem. It's just a passageway to eternity. When you love Jesus, you don't need to be afraid of death. 'Death where is your sting.' (I Corinthians 15:55-57). Death is not a problem. But I was twelve years of age, I did not want to go see Jesus yet. I thought that when morning comes, we were taking water out, every time that there was a wave that brought water in, and I was waiting for the sun to rise, and I waited for the life-boat to go up on top of a wave, and I used the binoculars to look, to see if I could see land anywhere. And no land was to be seen. Only more and more waves.

23. I asked my father, 'Did you manage to send an SOS message?' And he said, 'No. I tried but there were no ships close by.' So, we didn't know where we were; nobody else knew where we were. Nobody was coming to look for us. We were out in the ocean alone. We had one canister of water, and one tin of biscuits. I made sure that I brought a tin of biscuits. When life is about to end, you need some Danish butter cookies. I didn't know if that was going to be true or not, but I just happened to know where they were.

24. But then the sun started coming out, and it started getting miserable. The skin started peeling off of our heads. And I have a very vivid imagination. I saw my mother sitting with my younger brother, in the life-boat, and I imagined that we had run out of water, and my little brother would be crying for water and there would be no more, and I imagined my brother dying in front of me.

25. And the thought came to me, it would be easier if I just jumped out of the boat. It's cooler outside in the water. Take one breath of water and it's all over. It's in the moment of your darkness that the enemy comes to whisper. At that time, somebody had picked up from their cabin their most prized possession. Brought to the life-boat with them. It's

amazing what things you value, when your facing eternity. All of a sudden it doesn't matter what car you drive; it doesn't matter how much money you have in the bank account.

26. So, one person had brought their Bible, an old battered Bible. And he was going around, and people were opening up and reading, encouraging themselves. It came to me and I was about to pass it on to the next person, because I didn't believe in this book anymore, or the God that it spoke about, since this is not the way my God would treat people. Especially His servants, my parents, my grandparents that had served the Lord faithfully.

27. So, I was going to pass the Bible to the next person, and I didn't see, but I felt my mother looking at me. Well, maybe I'll just hold on to it for a little while, and as I was holding it I heard a whisper in my heart, 'Psalm 34. Psalm 34.' What's Psalm 34, I don't think I have ever read Psalm 34. And there, in the Book of Psalms, king David, 3000 years earlier, had written something for a boy about to be sunk in the Java sea.

28. As I was reading, I said, I can't believe, (Psalm 34:4-7), "I sought the Lord and He answered me. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor boy called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them."

29. I closed my Bible, I bowed my head, it was something that God did. The storm was still raging outside, but I heard Him say, "Peace, be still," (Mark 4:39) to the storm in my heart. And I prayed, and I said, 'Lord Jesus, please forgive me. I don't care if I live 5 more minutes, or 50 more years, the rest of my life is Yours. You can do with me whatever you want me to do. I'll go wherever You want me to go.' And it's because of that promise, that I'm here today. After 24 hours, a shipping vessel found us, took us to shore, we went back to Finland. We were saved.

30. But that's not the end of the story. Back then, it was 1983, the Soviet Union was still in full power back then. Churches along the border, like Finland, would take in teams into the Soviet Union, to encourage the underground church. There was a team that was going from our church in Helsinki, to Tbilisi, Georgia, and they asked my parents, if they would like to join them. And my parents are missionaries, so they said 'Of course.' And I thought, my parents are crazy.

31. Two months ago, we almost died, in the sea, and now they are going to go to the Soviet Union, they're going to be arrested by the secret police. They're going to be sent to Siberia. My parents must be crazy.

32. But they go to this underground church, and my mother shares the testimony of how God saved us. It's translated into Russian, and half of the people go 'Wow.' Then it's translated into Armenian, and the other half goes, 'Wow.' But in Armenian. And my mother says that this is an amazing story of how God saved us, there were so many details that I don't have the chance to tell you.

33. Fuel, we had enough for six hours if the tank was full. My mother laid her hand on the fuel tank, and this kept us for 24 hours. And when they checked it the next day, it was still full. A lot of things that I don't have time to say. But my mother is telling the story, and the church is going like, 'Wow!'

34. After that my father comes and preaches, and nobody is paying attention to him. They're talking amongst themselves. They're pointing at my mother and father. So, my father is saying, 'Well this sermon is not going anywhere.' So, he quickly prays and says 'Amen.' The people rush to the front, and they're pinching my parents, trying to see if these are real people or if they're angels.

35. And the pastor explains; On the 21st of September, we were having an all-night prayer meeting here, and he points to a 12-year-old boy, Evan. In the middle of the prayer meeting, Evan stands up, and says, 'I have a vision, I see a wooden white ship, that has sails on it, and there are evangelists on that ship, and satan is trying to kill them. We should pray for them.'

36. You know what the pastor did? What any good pastor would do. He went to the young boy, and said, 'You've been watching too many movies. Sit down.' But then 2 hours later, an old prophet, stands up and says, 'I see that ship. The ship has sunk. The evangelists are in a small boat, and satan is trying to kill them.' 6000 km away. An underground church in the Soviet Union, begins to pray, for a young boy, in the middle of the Java sea, because His name is 'El Roi,' the God who sees.

37. Let me tell you, He sees you! No matter what you've been through, no matter where you've gone, no matter what your address is, He knows exactly and precisely where you are. Nothing is hidden from Him. He knows you. He knows you. He has your address. And His arm is not too short to reach out and help you. Somebody say, Amen. His name is El Roi, the God who sees.

38. Would you bow your heads for just a moment. Are you going through a storm right now? Jesus sent me over just to tell you that He sees you. Is there an impossible situation before you? Is there pain inside of you? I am here to testify that His name is El Roi, the God who sees you. He sees you.

39. I want to pray for you. You might say, well I'm not an evangelist. I would disagree with that. But let's say that you're not, you are important to God. You say, nobody would know about me and my situation. You think that, I'm not sure that God cares for me. I'm a nobody. Let me tell you, you are His daughter, you're a princess in the Kingdom of God. Stop listening to the lies. You might say that nobody is praying for me. My Bible says, that Jesus Himself, is interceding for you before the Father, right this very moment and He is about to change your circumstance. He's about to say, "Peace. Be still," to the storm in your heart.

40. Who can I pray for today? Would you just put up your hand wherever you are? If God could see me, God bless you, God bless you. Keep those hands up for a little while. You're reaching up to heaven, not to me. It's just a sign to me that you heard the message. But this is a moment that you're reaching out to heaven, and you're saying, 'God, I need Your help. I want to be seen. I need You to see my situation, Lord.' Maybe it's not you. Maybe your daughter has run away. You haven't heard from her in a long time. And let me tell you, that God sees her.

41. So, heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus, we thank You, that Hagar gave you the name 'El Roi'. We thank You that today we can believe in You. We thank You that You are the God who sees. You're the God who sees me. You're the God who sees my family. You're the God who sees my bank account. You're the God who sees my food cupboard. You're the God

who sees my apartment. You're the God who sees my family. And we trust in You for Your hand to be stretched out, to help us, because You don't only stand outside. You come in to the situation, to deliver us from our fears. I bless Your people today. In Jesus' name. Amen.