



March 16, 2025

Joshua Parrish

Exodus 34:6-7

## Introduction

Who is God, and who am I? As we continue our Lenten series focusing on Exodus 34, Joshua Parrish explores God's self-description as "compassionate and gracious." These two attributes reveal profound truths not only about who God is but also about who we are in relation to Him. Through stories of ancient cultures, personal experiences, and Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son, we discover that while we are unworthy of God's love, we are worth everything to Him.

## Key Texts:

Exodus 34:6-7; Luke 15:11-32; Romans 3:10, 23; Romans 6:23

## Icebreaker

Has someone ever shown you unexpected compassion or grace when you felt you didn't deserve it? What happened, and how did it make you feel?

## Discussion Questions

1. In this week's message, Josh discussed how ancient cultures viewed their gods as angry, vengeful beings who needed to be appeased through constant offerings. How is the God of the Bible (YHWH) different from these ancient conceptions of deity? In what ways might we still sometimes treat God as if He were more like these ancient deities?
2. **Read Exodus 34:6-7 together as a group.** Josh explained that the Hebrew word for "compassion" has its roots in the word for "womb," suggesting God's maternal, nurturing love for His people. How does this change or enrich your understanding of God's compassion? What feelings or thoughts arise when you consider God loving you with the tenderness of a mother?

3. Josh described the word "gracious" as "only used as an attribute of God, as hearing the cry of the vexed debtor." Think about areas where you feel spiritually "indebted" or burdened. How does God's graciousness specifically address these areas of your life? What would it look like to fully receive His grace in these situations?
4. **Read Luke 15:11-32 together as a group.** In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the father runs to embrace his returning son before the son can even finish his prepared speech of repentance. What does this reveal about God's heart toward us when we return to Him after wandering? How might this change how we approach God when we've sinned?
5. Josh shared the powerful phrase: "I am unworthy, but worth everything!" How does this paradox resonate with your own spiritual journey? Where do you struggle to believe either part of this statement (that you are unworthy or that you are worth everything to God)?
6. The season of Lent reminds us of our mortality ("for dust you are, and to dust you will return") while pointing us toward the hope of resurrection. How does embracing both our sin condition and God's compassion and grace help us experience a more meaningful Lenten season? What practices might help us lean into both realities?

## **Key Takeaways**

- God's compassion is like a mother's love for her child in the womb—tender, protective, and deeply personal
- God's grace pardons us when we are hopelessly in debt with no way to repay
- Unlike ancient deities who demanded constant appeasement, YHWH runs toward us to embrace us
- We are simultaneously unworthy of God's love yet worth everything to Him
- Understanding God's compassion and grace transforms how we see both Him and ourselves
- The story of the Prodigal Son illustrates God's heart toward His wandering children

## **Notes**