

Last week we talked about one of God's names in the Bible. It starts with a Y and ends with way. Yahweh! Tell me all that you remember about exploring God's name of Yahweh. (*Quick notes: Yahweh means I am. First seen in Exodus 3 with Moses and the burning bush.*)

We aren't studying the names of God in the Bible just to memorize some funny sounding words. The names of God reveal to us God's nature. So studying the name of Yahweh actually taught us that God's nature is to be the **I am** of everything we need. When we need help, God says, "**I am** your help." When we need an answer, God says, "**I am** your answer." He is the great **I am** of everything we'll ever need.

Last week we also read what David wrote in Psalm 9:10, "Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you." David is telling us that when we know God's nature we will trust in Him. Because God is worthy of our trust. He never leaves. He never forsakes. He never forgets about us.

The name of God in the Bible we're going to talk about today is Jehovah-jireh. This is another really interesting name, isn't it? Jehovah-jireh means our provider.

What do you think the word provide means? The dictionary defines provide as "to prepare to meet a need." Who are some people in your life who provide for your needs?

We see the name Jehovah-jireh in Genesis 22. Abraham is traveling to the mount where they would offer sacrifices for their sins. Abraham is with his son Isaac, but they didn't take an animal with them to sacrifice. Abraham thinks he's heard God ask him to sacrifice his own son, which goes against everything Abraham knows about God. Abraham knows the nature of God, just like we're studying.

Abraham had seen God provide as his family moved away from their homeland. He had seen God provide him with the gift of Isaac when he and Sarah were too old to have a baby. So even though Abraham thought this is what God was asking, he believed God would do a miracle.

And guess what God did? He provided a ram stuck in the thicket as a sacrifice. He provided. Because God's nature is to provide for our needs.

Now, when we think about God providing for our needs, it can be easy to let our picture of God become kind of like a vending machine. How does a vending machine work? Yes, you put in your money, push the buttons of what you want, and then open the squeaky little flap that reveals what you ordered. Jehovah-jireh, the God who imagined the wonder of stars and galaxies, is not a vending machine. He's so much bigger and sees so much more than we can. He can never be some cold, distant machine we put orders into for the things we want.

God's nature is to know exactly who you are and exactly what you need. He provides gifts picked especially for you—gifts that are good for you and push you toward His truth. He's not a vending machine that gives everyone the same things because He delights in providing things designed for you.

Here's the tough thing. Our lives sometimes have things we don't want—like being mistreated by someone who should love us, getting really sick, struggling to do something that's easy for everyone else. Those are NOT things given to us by God. Sad and hard things happen because our world isn't the way God originally planned it to be without sin. In heaven there will be no tears and no pain.

But in our fallen, sinful world, God as Jehovah-jireh provided the ultimate gift of what we need. He gave us Jesus. He didn't ask Abraham to give up his son, but He did that Himself. Jesus was the sacrifice for our sins. He provided Jesus so we can go to heaven one day and so He can be close to us while we're on earth ... even though He is holy and perfect, and we are not. In the moments we're heartbroken or disappointed in something that did or didn't happen, God pulls us close. He whispers His love to us. He listens to us. Because that's His nature. It's who He is.

He is what we need. He is Jehovah-jireh, our provider.