

A Message from Pastor Travis Dean

Have you played hide-and- seek lately? I hadn't played it in quite a few years, until last Christmas. Our family and my brother's family were staying at Mom and Dad's house. My two nieces and nephew like to play hide-and- seek. So, I decided to get in on the fun. As a result, Elijah, our three-year-old son, has come to enjoy the game. Since Christmas he and I (with Abigail's company) have played this game quite often. Elijah hasn't learned how to hide and wait for me to find him, so I usually end up doing the hiding. While he's trying to find me, I'll often call out his name. He replies by calling out my name (Daddy). He has learned to continue saying, "Daddy!" realizing that if I keep answering, it will give him a clue as to where I am hiding. When he does find me, he immediately erupts into an excited giggle.

I used to think that God was hiding from me in some hard-to-find place. But I have learned a couple things in the Bible that have changed my mind. First, I have realized that God has always been seeking me. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God came looking for them. Genesis 3:9 says, "Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'" John 1:11 says, "He (Jesus) came to His own, and His own did not receive Him." This is the story throughout the Bible. God comes looking for me. And I hide from Him.

Secondly, I have learned that I often end up looking for God in all the wrong places. In my desperate search for God I kept hoping that maybe He would be behind the next page in my devotional book. Or maybe He would be behind the next sermon I would preach. Surely I would find Him if I went on a mission trip! Well, if I ever did seem to find Him in any of these kinds of places, it wasn't long before I was looking for Him again. 1 Corinthians 1:22, 23 says, "For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness." The problem with the Jews and Greeks is not that they weren't looking. They were looking in the wrong places. God chose to reveal Himself in "Christ crucified".

Whenever it seems that God is far away, I always find Him in the same place – at the cross. What Christ did for me there is like a light that makes it easy for me to find God. I never want to take my eyes off of this light. This is where God is. He will always be here.