**SLIDE 1 Truth and Steadfast Love**

Series: God Selfie

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 **Bumper Video:** Favorite Location selfie

You all have done an awesome job with your favorite selfies. We have a new selfie challenge for this coming week. We want you to go get a selfie with doing your favorite activity. We do not care if its knitting, playing pickle ball, running, shopping or sleeping we want to see you doing your favorite things.

**SLIDE 2** You can post your pictures on facebook and hashtag it #southsidechurchselfie and tag the location as Southside Church. You can email your picture to us or even just bring it in and we will make sure to scan it into our system.

It is a great privilege to be here with you and worship with you. Many of you may already know who I am, but for those that do not; I am Ally Weaver. I am one of the Student Ministry Pastors here at Southside. I have served in full-time youth ministry for over 9 years now.

About 6 months ago my family and I moved back here to Virginia, my home state after serving in Michigan for the last 6 years.

**SLIDE 3** My husband Tim has supported me in ministry and together we have two children Hannah (8) and Ezra (5). God has been directing this crazy, fun, and sometimes scary adventure my family and I are on. I am excited that the Southside family gets to be a part of our adventure.

That’s enough about who I am, today we are going to continue to look at who God is. For the past two weeks, we have spent time examining God’s selfie that He revealed to Moses. He shared about his traits of compassion, graciousness and his ability to be slow in anger. Today we are going to take a look at a trait many of us may have struggled with at some point. Today we are going to look at God’s character of being truth and his steadfast love to the thousands.

Have you ever struggled with trusting someone? I am sure many of you can agree with me it is not an uncommon thing to come across people and situations where you are unsure. I cannot use examples from my own children because they are terrible at being dishonest.

I can read right through them and most of the time I know what is true and what is not. However, when I was in college I was a nanny for a family with three boys. When I started with them, they were 5, 7 and 11.

The 5-year-old was a typical kindergartener who was sweet and had his moments but really hadn’t mastered the art of being dishonest. Much like my children, I could read him and know when he was being dishonest. The 7 year old, he had the personality where all he wanted to do was please me so even when he did wrong he knew it would please me more when he was honest then when he lied.

Now the 11 year old, he was tricky. Maybe he wasn’t so tricky as much as I was just a naïve college student playing an inexperienced parenting role and he was simply wiser than his younger brothers. This boy, he was good at tricking me.

I used to take him to tennis practice three days a week and for a long time I stayed at the practice until it was over. He was always respectful and helpful when I was around. We rarely had difficulty together. Actually, I think we had more fun times picking on each other than negative times.

One week he asked me to drop him off early so that he could get in a little extra practice time with his friends before the official practice began but he knew that I could not stay because I had to shuffle getting his other two brothers to their practices.

Initially I told him I could not do that but over time I decided he was old enough to hang out with his other tennis friends for 30 to 40 minutes while I shuffled the other two around. This happened for a few weeks until one day we got out of the younger twos practice early and I showed up to find him cuddled up with a sweet young lady who clearly was not on his BOYS tennis team. He broke my trust. He made me question if I should believe anything he told me.

Obviously, the unsupervised tennis practice time came to an immediate halt but our trust was still broken. It took me a long time to trust anything he said to me and even when I told him I trusted him I double and triple checked to see if he was being honest. He quickly learned that his lack of truth brought about my lack of trust. When the trust was broken, I struggled to even know who he was anymore.

**SLIDE 4** Our lives are filled with all kinds of situations where we struggle whether we should believe anyone anymore.

There are so many “fake news casters” who whole job is to make up stories or alter and exaggerate them to catch people’s attention or hide the truth. Our world is full of people who deceive and lead us astray making it hard to see truth in anything.

**SLIDE 5** There is only one being who is fully true and that being is God. God wanted us to know who He was so deeply He even revealed himself as truth.

Back in the time of Exodus, things were no different than things are now. People did and said things that conflicted with others beliefs making it hard for God to be seen as true. Let me give you a little back history. In Exodus we see that God had directed Moses to go and free the Israelite people from their oppression.

God rescued them and then sent the Ten Commandments to them through Moses. Moses then told them he was going to go to a place where he could go spend more time with God alone and that they should stay put.

Moses taught the people well about God and His love for them but Moses felt he needed God’s direction on the next steps on how to lead these people.

The Israelite people grew nervous because Moses had not returned as quickly as they expected so they went out and made a golden calf to worship in the meantime.

In my studies this past week, I read another pastors perspective on this in a more relatable way.

 Picture a couple who are struggling financially so one of them decides to pick up an extra job to help make a better life for their spouse but while they were hard at work their spouse was home using the extra finances to support an affair. This is basically what is happening in this passage.

God had worked so hard to help these people and wanted them to know Him as the only and most loving God and while He is attempting to sharpen and give more direction to their leader, they made a fake idol and began to worship it. It is pretty much a messed-up situation.

When Moses was spending time with God, God told him he and the Israelite people could have a glorious place but Gods presence could not go with them because the people were so stubborn. I think it is very important to take note what Moses does next.

**SLIDE 6** He explains to God that he cannot go anywhere without God. Moses told God, “you can keep all the success if it means you won’t be with us. What good are we without you?”. This brings about a real question for us; if you could have everything in the world you have ever wanted, success, money, relationships or the fancy sports car but you cannot have God would you go for it?

It is important to go back into history and remember who Moses is. Moses said not a chance to that question because he had lived that life already. Moses lived a glorious life, probably similar to what God was offering to these people but Moses understood it to a personal level. He was the prince of Egypt. He lived the royal life but he did not have God then. Moses understood that life without God was no good. Moses saw God as enough not just useful.  In 21st century terms Moses said, I don’t need the money, the awards, the big house, the fancy car; you can keep the overflow of wealth because without you, God I have nothing.

God recognized Moses faithfulness and honored Moses desire to remain connected to God. Here is Moses thinking he just won that request why not ask for another so he asks a big one. My kids do this all the time.

I told them recently that I would get them a treat for their good behavior. A treat in my mind was a small candy or slurpy. After they picked out their candy at Walmart, they both looked at me and began begging, “since we have been so good, can we get a toy too?”. This is similar to what Moses did.

God says to Moses that His presence would remain with Moses and his people and that He will have mercy and compassion on those who are fit. Moses then said, “show me your glory” in other words saying, I want to see you and know you more. God tells Moses that he cannot show His physical face to him because God is a high voltage- holy God and beholding His holiness is impossible.

Gods physical face is so holy that it is something we should be eagerly waiting to encounter on the day that He calls us home with Him. God sent Moses to a clef in a rock where God could come, cover Moses’ face, and reveal to him his back but not his face. God was ready to share with Moses who indeed He really was and is.

This brings us to the passage we are going to look at once again of God’s selfie.

This specific passage is referenced by other writers in the Bible at least 15 times so it’s one we should probably spend some time looking at. Let us read Exodus 34: 6-7.

**SLIDE 7-9 Exodus 34:6-7 (NRSV) 6  The Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation,[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+34%3A6-7&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-2504a)**] forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”**

We are going to tune into a few specific parts of God’s selfie today. First, I want to look at the end of verse 6. God tells Moses that He is abounding in steadfast love and truth. Our world is full of things that lead us not to trust or believe.

We have no idea what is truth and what is not. Much like the situation I shared earlier about the boy I nannied, once we have been shown that something is not true, we become skeptical of whether anything is true.

Here we are looking at a very clear description of not what others think about God but who God sees himself as. In my very first few weeks of ministry I had a student tell me that God is full of wrath and is out to smite us because we are messed up broken people.

Unfortunately, I am afraid this thought process is more common than not.

**SLIDE 10** The way we think about who God is will shape who we are. If God is viewed as a strict ruler, standing with His sword ready to smite the next sinner then we live in fear of him. If we see God as a drill Sergeant, screaming in our ear specific commands then we see God as aggressive and a dictator.  But if we see God the way he sees himself it’s nothing like that.

God tells Moses he is truth and we can see this in his own name.

**SLIDE 11** Truth is in the name of God. In the passage we just looked at we see that the word LORD is in all capital letters. There is significance to any time we see the LORD in all caps. Jewish context, the word God was too holy to even speak.

It would have been disrespectful to say God, in fact only the highest religious people would use the name God and when they did the Jewish people would shout and make loud noises so that they could not hear it because they felt even their ears were too filthy to be blessed with His holy name. The original text was written as a few letters with no vowels that we now pronounce as Yahweh, which literally translates to “I am”.

In the beginning of this passage God tells Moses, “I am, I am” not by simply making the beginning of a proper English sentence but he is saying I am the holy one. He is revealing to Moses that He is the one who is so holy that his name is highly treasured.

**SLIDE 12** “I am” is the holiest of all names.

All throughout scripture you can see where Jesus, God's son used the phrase “I am” to reflect more of the character and traits of God himself. When God used the word “I am” really implying that, He himself exists.

In other versions of this passage, it says, “I am abounding in faithfulness”.  When you look up the word faithfulness in the dictionary it is defined as stable, dependability, trustworthiness and TRUTH.

What God says is always true but what God is trying to reveal to Moses is deeper than that.

Who God is is true. He is stable, dependable and trustworthy. It says He is abounding in truth so therefore we understand it is a kind of truth that is not who we as humans are or can perform. He is overflowing with endless loving truth.

Unlike the situation I was in with the boy I was a nanny for, God never fails. He never leads us astray. God does not lie or deceive. We humans may make our best attempts at this but we sometimes willfully and accidentally misinform; who God is does not do either.

One of the most awesome parts about God being truth is that it is revealed through the life of Jesus.

John 1:14 says “**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”.**

Scripture reveals the truth of God progressively over time through the life of Jesus Christ. God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

The God from the old testament scriptures is the same God from the new testament therefore both are truth.

This revealing of who God is to Moses was not for just Moses alone. It was intended for all of the nation, for even those who Moses was leading and who had fallen into worshiping other Gods. God’s truth is shown in is steadfast love for the thousands. To make it even more awesome, God’s love was not just for the thousands that lived then but His love is extended for all generation from that day on.

**SLIDE 13** God is faithful to love and faithful to uphold love. The very love of the God who is truth, mercy, compassion, and slow to anger is extended to you and me.

I do not know many of you very well but I know a God who wants you to see Him as true and loving. Maybe you are thinking, I have tried to see God’s truth and His love but so far all I see is a messed up me with a bunch of messed up circumstances all around me.

Maybe you are thinking this whole truth thing is unfathomable because we live in a world that tells us that there is no truth.

Maybe you’re that person who has been misled to think of God as a vengeful and reckless God. Today I want you to know that God does not dictate our life situations and choices but He does offer love in the midst of them.

God is the only truth we can depend on being stable. God is true and truth comes from His name. The desire of God is that whatever level of spiritual journey you are on, pre-Christian, sapling, or seasoned is to trust in God’s name.

**SLIDE 14** We cannot trust just when it’s easy or when it’s going the right way but trust in His name in all steps, stages and circumstances of life.

Some of you may know my personal story of how I have had to lean on Gods truth but others of you may not. Almost 6 years ago I went through what was the toughest battle of my life to this point. I was diagnosed with a large brain tumor while 25 weeks pregnant with my son. After a craniotomy, radiation and chemo the tumor was still there but it was stable enough for doctors put me into remission with close monitoring.

About 2 weeks ago I went for a routine scan and found out that my tumor has become active again and requires treatment.

This past week I had to look into the face of the ugly jar of medication that may weaken my body in attempts to kill these cancerous cells but I know who will pull me through. I cannot say I am excited or totally ok with this next chapter of my life but I can rest on God’s truth.

I am human. I will not lie to you and say that there were not times were I really have struggled. I have battled with understanding why this even has happened and why I am facing it again. I have been in some really low place emotionally with this diagnosis. I struggle with worry and fear.

I think I have probably experienced every range of emotions that exist with the original cancer diagnosis but as I battled this same illness, I have to rest on the promise and the truth that I did not know my future but I knew who holds my hand. Gods promises is what has brought me here. As I look back at my journey, I see Gods’ fingerprints in so many places. I see where His truth surpassed every doctor’s thoughts. I am still alive, I have a son who is healthy and I am speaking to you today with a large mass resting on my speech and memory portion of my brain.

**SLIDE 15** I know that God is truth.

I do not tell you this because I want pity from you but instead because I want you to see through my life that God is who He says He is. I do not know each one of you and your personal circumstances but God does and He wants you to be ready to walk through life with you. I know that life is so much better when we let Him walk through it with us. God is not just faithful for me; He tells Moses that He is steadfast in love for the thousands. That includes me and each of you.

As we close, I want to encourage you to look and evaluate your perspective of who God is.

**SLIDE 16** Is He true in your life? Do you see His word as truth? Can you share His truth in love?

-Prayer

Is God true in your life? I encourage you to put yourself in a place where you can see His love. Read the Bible, it is truth. Join a small group.

**SLIDE 17** This weekend all around our room there are tables for group link for you to join a small group.

Take the next step to living life with others who can encourage you and you can learn more about God's truth. Tune in the next few weeks and learn more about who God sees himself to be. God desires for you to see Him as truth and loving. Wherever you fall on the spectrum of pre-Christian to seasoned Christian, I encourage you to take the next step to see how God is truth and loving in your life.

We are going to go into a time of worship and while we do I want you to know that these alters are open for you to come before the great I am and surrender it all to him. If you want someone to pray for you, they will be down here for you. Maybe you need to go to the cross and surrender your misconceptions of who God is. You can even go to the group link tables at the back and get connected in a small group. Whatever God is calling you to I encourage you to be obedient today.