

“I Want to Believe but...On Demand God”  
1 Samuel 12:24 (NIV), Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV), Romans 8:37-39 (NIV)  
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Rev. Dave Baldrige  
Palm Harbor United Methodist Church, Palm Harbor, Florida

We begin a new sermon series today. Today is the first of this four-part sermon series. At our worship planning retreat where we pray about sermons, topics and do advance sermon prep we identified that many people have difficulty believing in God because...well it just seems either God is unfair, or doesn't seem to be present, allows suffering, or that we just can't 'feel' Him like others do.

Craig Groeschel is an author and senior pastor of life.church. It is a video satellite type of church that is 25 locations in 7 states. Their attendance is 100,000 people. Craig and life.church are all about sharing information for free. If any of you use the free Bible App called Youversion---that was made possible by Groeschel and life.church. He even lists sermons, notes, images, videos that he says “you don't even have to give us credit for.” He believes in Church with a capital C. He provides all these free resources to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

So, I've never done this before---but this sermon series and many of the images are from Groeschel. The message is not necessarily verbatim, but many of the thoughts and phrases, I confess come from Groeschel. We give God the credit for how He may use this.

We pray and pray but God doesn't give me what I ask for and how I ask for it...how can I believe.

Watch this text message between friends.

<https://open.life.church/items/155281-opener-mp4>

We have so many that want to believe but...something is keeping them from believing. We have developed a distorted view of God. We want God to give us what we want when we want it.

Now let me go to the past and then make the transition to today. How many remember the showing of the TV show Happy Days!!! Xxxx Now if you wanted to watch that show you had to be in front of the TV at the right time and on the right channel. How many remember the popular show “Dallas.” And when the world stopped and we definitely had to be home to watch “Who shot JR?”

Guess what we don't have to do that now. We have TV On Demand. **(image)** We come home late we can watch it On Demand. We could even watch it the next day On Demand, when we want to watch it.

Many years ago, I was the on-call Chaplain for a local hospital, when the regular chaplain was gone. Yes, this was even the day of pagers. I had looked forward all week to watching a movie. 15 minutes before the movie was over, my pager goes off. I responded to the page and discovered there was a situation that I needed to head to the hospital immediately. Guess what...I missed the end of the movie. Couldn't watch the next day. I couldn't On Demand it. Certainly, we live in a

different world today and that type of culture has infiltrated our views of Christianity and even God.

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How many binge watched a show this last month? Xxxx How many used On Demand this month? Xxxx

We get things quickly now. Love Amazon Prime and free shipping. And now not only 2 days or less sometimes shipped in one day. So, God, I want you On Demand...I prayed about it, God didn't do it when I wanted and how I wanted therefore I don't believe in God. I want an On Demand God.

Where are you God? I struggle financially and try to be okay. What's up with that God? Has anybody here prayed and prayed for someone to be healed...and they weren't? It's frustrating. If God is not On Demand then who is He? Is He real? Is He good? Does He not care?

Get ready for some disappointment---and On Demand God does not exist. Groeschel says this **(image)** God doesn't exist to serve us. We exist to serve Him.

Wuh woa! We are not the main characters in the Bible. We are not the main characters in our spiritual life---God is.

We must come to terms with the realization that God is not a supernatural genie in a bottle type of God. Let's ask and automatically, POOF, it happens.

Have you seen the coke machines that movie theaters and others have now? **(image)** It is called the Coca Coal Freestyle machine. We get to pick and choose what drink, and then we push another button and do we want to add cherry, vanilla or lemon. Poof...here comes the drink just like we want when we want it.

Warning: God is Lord of all and we are His servants. He does not exist to serve us, we exist to serve Him.

Well then, who is this God? What is His role? What exactly does He do in my life?

**1 Samuel 12:24 New International Version (NIV) 24 But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.**

Okay I want to serve Him faithfully...but. And what great things has He actually done for me?

Our prayers are focused on asking God to carry out our desires as opposed to submitting to God's will. On Demand God.

J.B. Phillips wrote a classic little book back in 1953. **(image)** I recommend it. It is still in print. It is entitled "Your God is Too Small." A guide for sceptics and believers alike. In that book he

says, "We can hardly expect to escape a sense of futility and frustration until we begin to see what He is like and what His purposes are."

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So, who is God? What is He really like? What are His purposes?

### **3 Qualities of the Heart of God**

#### **1. God's Heart is always loving.**

Parents there is never a time you don't love your children. But to be honest there have many times that I didn't like my children. Or at least didn't like what they did.

Have you ever told a child no. And they look at you with questioning eyes. Or they ask, "Why not?" And you know as is your parental role that saying yes is not the right thing to do at this particular time.

God's Heart is always loving.

#### **Romans 8:37-39 New International Version (NIV)**

**<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

I like the way Groeschel puts it, "Who shall separate you? What shall separate you from the love of Christ? Shall financial trouble? Shall relational breakdowns? Shall unemployment? Shall cancer? Shall depression? We can answer it this way. Verse 37 Paul says, "No. In all these things and everything you can think of, we are more than conquerors." Through what? Through our own power? No. "Through him who," what? XXXX "Through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future nor any powers, neither height nor depth or anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

We don't have an On Demand God, but we do have an always loving God. God's heart is always loving. There's never a time that he doesn't love you, but He will not always do what we think that He should do.

Groeschel puts it this way. **(Image)** God doesn't prove His love when He answers our prayers. God proves His love when He sent His son.

### **3 Qualities of the Heart of God**

#### **1. God's Heart is always loving.**

#### **2. God's ways are always higher.**

If there is an Information Booth in heaven it is going to be one long eternal line. Who here has not asked, "Why?" Why did the divorce happen? Why did Hurricane Michael hit where it did?

Why didn't God do something to stop it? What about that fine Christian that has cancer? And yes God what about that child that was killed by a drunk driver?

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Many times I have told people in my office I wish I could put out of a drawer in my desk that was the fix it drawer or a drawer that holds all the answers. There are many things that I can't fix. But I know the FIXER. There are many things that I don't have the answer for. But I know the One who has the answers. The problem is things are not fixed or we don't have the answers On Demand.

My honest answer to some of these tough questions is---"I just don't know." But hear these words from the prophet Isaiah.

**Isaiah 55:8-9 New International Version (NIV) <sup>8</sup>“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup>“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

We are to serve a powerful God and we don't always have the answers. We don't always understand. I don't understand a lot of things about life. And I don't have to understand everything to trust God's heart, to trust His character, to trust His nature, and to trust His goodness. His ways are higher. His ways are different than mine.

There are many things I didn't understand when they happen, but a week, a month, a year, or even years down the road I can look back and understand a little better. However, there are somethings, in all honesty I'm not sure we will completely understand until we arrive in heaven and ask God Himself.

An On Demand God doesn't exist. God doesn't always do what we want. We exist to serve Him. His heart is always loving. His ways are always higher.

### **3 Qualities of the Heart of God**

- 1. God's Heart is always loving.**
- 2. God's ways are always higher.**
- 3. God's presence is always enough.**

Here's a radical statement. If only we would believe it and live it. Buckle up, here it is. "I don't ever have to worry what will happen to me because my God with me."

God loves. God never leaves. In one sense I do not have to worry what will happen TO ME, because God is WITH ME. The same God that is with me on the mountain top is with me in the valleys.

How many have things going on in this life you really don't understand? XXXXX I want to pray the prayer that Craig Groeschel prayed for His people:

"Father, I pray today for miracles because you are God who often does miracles. I pray for relational breakthroughs. God, I pray for physical healing. God, I pray for financial blessings for those who are hurting. I pray for provision. God, I pray for healing where there is brokenness. I

pray for restoration. God, I pray for those who need to overcome depression. God, I pray for those who are hurting, those who feel alone. I pray for marriages, God. We pray and ask for miracles and we believe that you're a God of miracles.”

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Oh, to feel His love. Oh, to know that His ways are higher. May you know right now that God is here. That God is with you. He is always loving. His ways are always higher, and His presence is always enough.

There is only one-time God is On Demand---and it is when you need forgiveness. No matter what you've done or how many times you've done it. On Demand you can say, “Jesus, I need your grace. I need your forgiveness of my sins.” And at that very moment, that very second your sins are forgiven. You are a new creation.

Other On Demand God assumptions are a distorted view. I want to believe but...

We are going to have a time of silent prayer right now here in your seats. Then when the Praise Band starts if you want to come forward and have prayer we invite you and welcome you to do that. It would be our honor to pray with you.