



Packet 3

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NAME ABOVE **ALL** NAMES

SMALL GROUP LESSONS - PACKET 3

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NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU
THE LORD IS
OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah 23:1-6

We often feel the pressure to prove ourselves at work, in our relationships, even before God. Deep down, many of us carry a belief that if we just try hard enough, do enough, or live morally enough, we can earn the approval our hearts long for. While those tactics may help us gain that promotion or that meaningful pat on the back, they don't affect our position before God. The scriptures are clear that we cannot earn God's approval by good works or best efforts. But the name *Jehovah Tsidkenu* offers us a profound hope: **God Himself is our righteousness**. We don't bring our righteousness to God, we receive it from Him.

In Jeremiah 23, God speaks to a nation that is spiraling under corrupt leadership and spiritual failure. The leaders who were meant to care for and shepherd them had led them astray and neglected them. They were a people without a shepherd, misled and vulnerable. Into that brokenness, God promises a Righteous Branch who will reign wisely and bring true justice, righteousness, safety, and security. And His name will be called: Jehovah Tsidkenu, *The LORD is our righteousness*. It's not just a title, but a promise of hope for broken people who can't make themselves righteous.

This promise points us to Jesus, who through His life, death, and resurrection didn't just show us righteousness, but became righteousness *for* us. By faith, we are no longer defined by our failures but are now clothed in His righteousness.

BREAK THE ICE

Describe a time when you acted like you knew what you were doing but really didn't.

READ IT

Read Jeremiah 23:1-6

APPLY IT

The failure of Israel's leaders sets the stage for one of the clearest messianic promises in Jeremiah: God will raise up a new kind of King, "a righteous Branch." This promised King won't repeat the injustices of past leaders but will instead rule wisely, embodying and providing the very righteousness the people lacked.

Who is this righteous Branch but Jesus! Every promise of Jeremiah 23 is realized in Him: He cares for His people as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep (John 10:11–15); He reigns as a righteous and just King—not only being righteous, but becoming our righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21); He gives eternal safety, security, and salvation to His people.

In Jesus, the failures of every earthly shepherd are answered with the faithfulness of the Good Shepherd, as He not only reigns, but rescues, restores, and clothes us in His righteousness.

1. **Jeremiah describes a king who doesn't just model righteousness but *becomes* our righteousness. Why is that distinction important for understanding the gospel?**

2. **How do the themes of safety, security, and salvation in Jeremiah 23 find their ultimate expression in Jesus?**

The pursuit of righteousness through adherence to the Law is a persistent human struggle. In pride, people from every generation have attempted to be “good enough” in the eyes of God. Yet Scripture makes it clear that righteousness cannot come through works and obedience to the Law, because the Law exposes sin—it doesn’t remove it.

“If righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”

Galatians 2:21

“For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight... But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.”

Romans 3:20–22

The Law is holy, but it was never meant to save—it was meant to reveal our need for a Savior. Attempting to earn righteousness by the Law is to reject Christ and fall into a self-righteousness that falls short of God’s holiness.

3. How does the name *Jehovah Tsidkenu* confront the prideful assumption that we can be righteous on our own?

4. What is the difference between using the Law as a mirror and using it as a ladder? Which approach do you tend to drift toward?

5. How does the gospel confront both legalism and lawlessness?

Let's not forget that 1 Corinthians 15:1–2 says, *“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved...”* We don't graduate from the gospel, we move deeper into it. I recently heard someone say something to the effect that in every other religion, people are continually becoming what they are not, but Christianity teaches that we are continually becoming what we already are.

- Studies were compiled and questions were written by the VBC Pastoral Team.**

NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

JEHOVAH
MEKODDISHKEM
THE LORD WHO
SANCTIFIES

INTRODUCTION

Exodus 31:12-17 & Matthew 5:13-16

In our house, we have two kinds of dishes: everyday plates and fine china. The everyday stuff is durable, functional, and it's always in the dishwasher. But the fine china is a different story. It's set apart and reserved for special occasions, displayed in a cabinet, and always handled with care.

That's the idea behind Jehovah Mikoddishkem which means "the LORD who sanctifies you" first seen in Exodus 31:13. To be sanctified means to be set apart, not for storage in a dusty basement, but for a special and sacred purpose. God sets His people apart for Himself, and this sanctification isn't merely an internal sanctification, but an external one as well – one that marks us as different from the world around us.

In God's eyes, our holiness and sanctification is more than just a label or status that we hold, it's who we are, it's our calling. And the one who calls us is Jehovah Mekoddishkem, "the LORD who sanctifies".

BREAK THE ICE

What is your most prized possession and what makes it so special to you?

READ IT

Read Exodus 31:12-17 & Matthew 5:13-16

APPLY IT

When God declared in Exodus 31:13, *“I, the LORD, sanctify you”*, it came in the context of Israel’s observation of the Sabbath. Like the people living it, the Sabbath was a day set apart from the rest – it was to be treated differently and lived differently. The Sabbath wasn’t just about rest. It served as a weekly reminder that the holiness and sanctification of God’s people wasn’t self-made, but God-given.

This truth carries into the New Testament. In Christ, believers are called saints (“holy ones”) , not because of what they have done, but because of what Christ has done. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:11, *“You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*

Our holiness is not self-made, but God-given.

1. **What are some other reminders God has woven into our lives so that we might not forget that He is Jehovah Mekoddishkem, the LORD who sanctifies us?**
2. **The Sabbath was a sign that God's people belonged to Him. What are some visible signs in a believer’s life today that point to the fact that we are set apart by God?**
3. **How does remembering that sanctification is *God-given* and not *self-made* affect the way we live out our sanctification?**

In Matthew 5:13, Jesus says, “*You are the salt of the earth.*” Salt preserves, it purifies, and flavors. In the ancient world, it was essential precisely because it was *different* from what it touched. That’s the picture that Jesus gives: those who are sanctified by God are called to live in a way that stands out and in doing so, they become salt to the world.

Being sanctified means we don’t flow with the cultural current, we live against it. And when we do, we season the world with the presence of a better Kingdom, one that is eternal and will never crumble.

But Jesus warns, “*If salt loses its taste... it is no longer good for anything...*” A Christian who simply blends in with the world around them loses what makes them impactful. I’ve heard it said, “You can’t change the world by becoming like it.”

4. In what ways does being “salty” actually benefit the world around us?

How have you seen someone’s faithfulness make an impact on others because it stood out?

5. How are you seeing your own faith “preserve, purify, or enhance” those around you?

- 6. Jesus warns about salt losing its taste. What do you think causes that kind of spiritual dulling in a believer's life? What might be some warning signs?**

Right after calling His disciples the salt of the earth, Jesus calls them “the light of the world”. Our sanctification isn’t meant to be kept secret, but to shine. In the ancient world, especially in hilly regions like Galilee and Judea, cities were often built on elevated ground for defense and visibility. A city on a hill couldn’t be hidden, especially at night when lamps and fires illuminated it against the dark landscape. Travelers and caravans could spot these cities from miles away, using them as beacons to guide their way.

But Jesus doesn’t stop with geography—He brings the image home. His followers are like a lamp that isn’t hidden under a basket, but lifted up on a stand to give light to everyone in the house. That light is meant to reach into every corner of our relationships, workplaces, and communities—so that others see it and glorify God.

The temptation to dim our light, to blend in to avoid discomfort or opposition is like lighting a lamp only to stuff it out. If God has made us “the light of the world” then our calling is clear: “Let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine.”

- 7. Why do you think Jesus uses both public (city on a hill) and personal (lamp in a house) imagery for light? How do those two ideas apply to your life?**

8. When are you most tempted to “blend in” or “hide your light”? What does that look like practically in your life?

9. What’s one way this week that you could live out your sanctification more intentionally or more clearly?

NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

JEHOVAH SABAOTH THE LORD OF HOSTS

INTRODUCTION

Psalm 46

The name ***Jehovah Sabaoth***—“The LORD of Hosts”—appears nearly 250 times in the Old Testament. It portrays God as the Commander of heaven’s armies and the sovereign Lord over all earthly and cosmic powers. When His people feel overwhelmed, outnumbered, or overlooked, *Jehovah Sabaoth* reminds them that their God is never outmatched. He is not only near but mighty in battle and glorious in might.

This name is first used by Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:11 as she pleads for a child, appealing to God’s supreme authority when all earthly hope had failed. Later, David invokes this name as he faces Goliath—not with sword or spear, but “in the name of the LORD of hosts” (1 Sam. 17:45). The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah use it to announce God’s justice and defend His honor when nations rise up against Him. And in the New Testament, James speaks of the cries of the oppressed reaching “the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth” (James 5:4), echoing the same plea for divine justice.

To know Jehovah Sabaoth is to know that we are never fighting alone. The God of angel armies is with us.

BREAK THE ICE

What’s your favorite underdog story and why does it resonate with you?

READ IT

Read Psalm 46

After the chaos of roaring seas and quaking earth, verse 4 introduces a surprising contrast: a quiet river bringing gladness. Ancient Jerusalem had no river, so this imagery appears to be symbolic, pointing to the peace, provision, and sustaining presence of God Himself in the midst of His people. While the world outside “rages and totters”, God’s city rejoices, not because of strong walls or skilled warriors, but because “God is in the midst of her” (v. 5).

God’s presence doesn’t mean we won’t experience conflict or chaos, but it does change how we experience it. He doesn’t merely send help; He is our help.

Twice in this Psalm we hear the refrain:

“The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.”

It’s a reminder that the One who commands angel armies also walks with us. He is the LORD of Hosts – limitless in might. He’s the God of Jacob – personal, covenantal, faithful.

That combination is our hope: a God who is transcendent in power and intimate in presence.

3. What are some contemporary examples of “nations raging and kingdoms tottering”?

How does knowing God as Jehovah Sabaoth impact how you feel in response to those conflicts?

4. How have you seen God’s presence bring stability and confidence to someone’s life?

The final section shifts our focus from fear to faith, inviting us to “behold the works of the LORD”, not just what He’s done in the past, but what He continues to do. God is not just a refuge in the midst of chaos, He is the one who brings an end to it, not by negotiation but by sovereign command. The same God who created the world with a word can silence armies and destroy the weapons formed against Him.

Then comes one of the most familiar lines in all of Scripture:

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

This is often quoted as a comforting whisper, but in context, it’s a royal decree. The Hebrew *raphah* literally means to “let go” or “cease striving”. It’s God essentially saying: “Stand down. I am God. I will be exalted”. It’s an invitation to trust in His victory and a reminder that God doesn’t need our swords to defeat His enemies, our words to defend His honor, or our strength to secure His victories. He is Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts.

5. What are some of the “works of the LORD” that give you great confidence in God’s strength and might to triumph? (e.g. stories from the Bible or events that you’ve experienced or witnessed in life)

6. What does it practically mean to “be still and know that I am God”?

If you step back and look at this Psalm as a whole, it begins and ends with two declarations: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” and “The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress”. Sandwiched in between those declarations is the tension we feel every day between the chaos in our circumstances and confidence in God’s control. The Psalm doesn’t ignore the noise and the chaos. Instead it anchors us in something stronger: the presence of Jehovah Sabaoth.

7. **As you consider the tension between chaos and confidence in your own life, which truth from this Psalm do you most need to hold onto right now—and why?**

NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

JEHOVAH ROHI
THE LORD IS MY
SHEPHERD

INTRODUCTION

Psalm 23 & John 10:7-18

Most of us don't spend our days around sheep, but even without firsthand experience, we know what a shepherd does – he leads, protects, and provides for the sheep under his care. That's the picture David reaches for when he says, "*The LORD is my shepherd*" in Psalm 23. It's not just a poetic picture of who God is, it's a personal statement about the relationship God has with His people.

David, of all people, knew what it was like to be the one holding the staff. He had fought off wild animals to protect his flock. He had walked them to water, found them food, and stayed close when they were vulnerable. So when David calls God his shepherd, he's not using a throwaway image. He's saying, "That's exactly who God is. That's exactly what God does."

The name *Jehovah Rohi* reminds us that God doesn't lead us from a distance. He walks with us. He knows us. He knows what we need, where we're going, and even when we've wandered off. And more than that, He comes after us when we do. If you've ever needed guidance, care, or comfort, you'll find it in **Jehovah Rohi**.

BREAK THE ICE

What's the most 'you' thing you've done lately?

READ IT

Read Psalm 23 & John 10:7-18

APPLY IT

Sheep aren't known for being resourceful or directionally gifted. They need someone to lead them. In fact, they won't survive long without guidance, and they often don't know what's good for them even when it's right in front of them. The same could be said of us.

The name *Jehovah Rohi* speaks to a God who takes responsibility for the well-being of His people. In verses 2 and 3, David uses two different Hebrew words for "lead", and both matter. First, "*He leads me beside still waters*" uses the word *nahal*, which means to gently guide, like a shepherd patiently walking with his sheep. It speaks of attentiveness, calm, and care. Then, in "*He leads me in paths of righteousness*," David uses *nachah*, which means to direct or steer with purpose—often toward what is right or good. One word paints a picture of tender care; the other, purposeful direction. Jehovah Rohi does both.

He knows where He's leading us and He knows what we need along the way.

1. **Psalm 23 uses two different images of God's leadership—gentle guidance (*nahal*) and purposeful direction (*nachah*). Why are both aspects of God's leadership so important to?**

How have you recently seen God leading you in both those ways?

2. **In John 10:3–4, Jesus says that His sheep follow Him because they know His voice. What does it look like to recognize and respond to the voice of our Shepherd in everyday life?**

Even the peaceful image of lying down in green pastures points to Jehovah Rohi's protection. Sheep won't lie down unless they feel completely safe – free from fear, hunger, and danger. That kind of rest only happens when the shepherd has dealt with every threat. So when David says, *"He makes me lie down,"* he's describing a deep sense of security. Jehovah Rohi doesn't just give us rest, He makes it possible by leading us through everything that unsettles us.

But life isn't all green pastures. David knows that. That's why he says, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me."* The danger is real, but so is the Shepherd. Jehovah Rohi doesn't send us into the valley with a map, He's with us. His rod protects. His staff guides. And both remind us to stay close when the path gets difficult and dark.

3. Sheep won't lie down unless they feel completely safe. What are some of the things that keep you spiritually "on edge"? What would it look like to let God settle those?

4. David mentions the rod and the staff. How have you experienced God's protection and guidance in a season when the path was unclear or difficult?

5. How does Jesus fulfill this role with what He says in John 10:7-18?

Psalm 23 ends with hopeful confidence that, under the watchful care of Jehovah Rohi, *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”* The same Shepherd who led him and protected him is the one who will preserve him to the end.

The word “follow” here may sound passive in English, but in Hebrew, it’s much stronger. *Radaph* means “to pursue” or “chase after.” It denotes a confidence that God’s goodness and mercy aren’t lagging behind us, they’re chasing after us. Like a shepherd who notices a wandering sheep and runs after it, Jehovah Rohi doesn’t let us drift unnoticed.

Jesus echoes this promise in John 10: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them... I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” If you belong to Him, your future isn’t up for grabs. The Shepherd who calls you by name is the one who will preserve you.

6. Do you tend to live more like a sheep being carried along by the Shepherd or a sheep trying to prove it belongs in the flock? Why do you think that is?

7. What do you think it means that “no one can snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:28)? How does that apply when we feel spiritually weak?

8. Looking back over this Psalm, how does the image of God as your Shepherd deepen or reshape your understanding of what it means to follow Him and trust Him?

NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

JEHOVAH
SHAMMAH
THE LORD IS THERE

INTRODUCTION

Revelation 21:3-4

In the final verse of Ezekiel, after chapters filled with visions of judgment, exile, and restoration, God leaves His people with a promise: “*And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The Lord is There*” (*Jehovah Shammah*). It’s a name that doesn’t just pinpoint a location, it points to a reality. God has not forgotten His people. He has not abandoned His covenant. He is there.

This is the hope that carries weary exiles home, that heals the wounds of rebellion, and that renews the ruins of a broken world. Even when God’s glory had once departed the temple because of their sin, His final word is presence—not absence. Grace—not condemnation. *Jehovah Shammah* is a promise that God is there.

And this promise echoes all throughout Scripture. Jesus is the living fulfillment of that name – *Immanuel*, God with us. He stepped into our world and dwelt among us. He’s sent the Spirit who now dwells in us. The presence of God is no longer confined to a city or a sanctuary, it’s in the hearts of His people. And one day, when all things are made new, the book of Revelation tells us that “the dwelling place of God will be with man” once more, forever.

Jehovah Shammah—from beginning to end—is the story of a God who’s there.

BREAK THE ICE

What’s the most random place you’ve ever run into someone you know?

READ IT

Read Revelation 21:3-4

APPLY IT

The theme of God's abiding presence is one of the most consistent threads throughout Scripture. While the specific name is only used once at the end of Ezekiel, the reality it points to is woven throughout the entire biblical narrative:

- **Genesis 28:16** – Jacob says, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.”
- **Exodus 33:14** – God says to Moses, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”
- **Psalms 139:7–10** – “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?”
- **Isaiah 43:2** – “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you...”
- **Matthew 1:23** – Jesus is called *Immanuel*, “God with us.”
- **Matthew 28:20** – “I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- **Revelation 21:3** – “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.”

From beginning to end, the truth that God is Jehovah Shammah is central to the whole story of redemption.

1. **God's presence shows up in many different circumstances – dreams, wilderness, fear, fire, commissioning, and hope. What does that variety teach us about where and how God meets us?**

The opening pages of Scripture show God walking in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. The devastating reality is that sin destroyed that intimacy with God as Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden. And from then on, the pages of Scripture detail God's plan of redemption to redeem sinful man and restore them to Himself so that the final pages of Scripture declare a future promise for all eternity in glory: *"the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people"*.

Too often, we imagine the glory of heaven as streets of gold, reunion with loved ones, or the absence of pain. Those are all wonderful gifts, but the greatest glory of eternity is this: *God is there*. His presence is the prize. As Jesus said in John 17:3, *"This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."* That's the deepest longing of our hearts—to be with God.

2. How does Jesus' definition of eternal life in John 17:3 challenge or shape your view of what heaven is really about?

3. In what ways do you find yourself tempted to seek the gifts of God more than the presence of God?

- 4. How might keeping the future hope of “God dwelling with us” impact the way you live in the present—your priorities, your worship, your endurance?**

Jehovah Shammah isn't just a promise for the past or a hope for the future—it's a truth we can cling to in the present. When Joshua stood at the edge of the Promised Land, tasked with leading God's people into unknown territory, God didn't give him a battle plan or an exit strategy. He gave him a promise: *“I will be with you.”* That same promise has been passed down through the pages of Scripture to every believer.

The author of Hebrews, writing to a people facing pressure and persecution, reminds us that God hasn't changed. His presence is still our anchor. He doesn't promise that the path will be easy—but He does promise we won't walk it alone.

- 5. What does it actually look like to experience God's presence in your everyday life – at work, at home, or in the middle of ordinary routines?**

6. We often want answers or control, but like Joshua, God offers us His presence instead. Why is that enough? When is it hard to believe that it is?
7. Are there specific practices or habits that help you become more aware of God's presence throughout the day?

This summer, we've explored the names of God and have seen how each name has revealed something distinct about who He is, how He works, and how we can relate to Him. We've stood in awe of His power, found rest in His peace, leaned into His provision, and rejoiced in His righteousness.

We've seen how each of these names reminds us that God is not distant or indifferent. He is personal, faithful, and near. He sees, He knows, He provides, He heals, He sanctifies, He reigns, He shepherds, He is present.

And through it all, we've come to see that the names of God are not just about what He does, but about who He is. We can trust Him more fully, worship Him more deeply, and follow Him more confidently because we've glimpsed more of His character.

So as we close this series with *Jehovah Shammah*—"The Lord is There"—we're reminded that God has always been with His people, is with us now, and will be with us forever. He is the *Name Above All Names*.

8. Which name of God most surprised you, challenged your thinking, or met you in a new way?

9. How has this series deepened not only your understanding of God, but your walk with Him?