**SLIDE 1 Patient and Abounding In Steadfast Love**

Series: God Selfie

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 **Bumper:**

Welcome to Southside, we are glad you’re with us today!

This is week two in our series titled, God Selfie. Exploring God’s Selfie He proclaimed to Moses when He revealed His glory.

**SLIDE 2** Speaking of selfies how about the **#southsidechurchselfie** challenge!

We loved all the selfies with your favorite people - this week we have a new challenge for you!

We want you to get a selfie in your favorite spot! Remember no extreme selfies that put you at risk…..safety first!

Favorite spot yes, you dangling from a high-rise no way!

Speaking of favorite spots, Moses had a favorite spot; it was the place where God gave him a selfie!!

A selfie is a self-portrait that reveals something about yourself.

We learn about this place in the book of Exodus the second book in our Bible.

In Chapter 34 we read about this incredible scene where God describes Himself while allowing His glory to pass by Moses.

God gives Moses the perfect word picture to describe the way God interacts with His people.

In fact 2019 is a very special year, this year is one of those rare years where on the lunar calendar, which is what the Jewish calendar is based on, lines up with our calendar.

September 1st is the first day of Elol.

Which is the first day of the last month in the Jewish calendar celebrating the day Moses met God on the mountain, the very event we are studying in this series.

**SLIDE 3** And get this, on the final weekend of this series, the 29th of September, is Rosh Hashanah.

This is the day the Jewish people celebrate God revealing His glory to Moses.

This series was planned over a year ago, we had no idea that God’s selfie series would be preached on the exact historical dates this event took place!

You talk about God’s glory.

Last week we honed in on the first part of God’s self-description where He says I am merciful and gracious.

Today we want to explore the next words God reveals in His selfie!

**SLIDE 4 Exodus 34:6 (NKJV) – ……………. “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness…”**

Longsuffering and abounding in goodness.

A good practice when studying a passage from the Bible is to compare several different English translations.

Your see the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew not English.

As a matter of fact, not a single word in the Bible was originally written in English.

Our Bibles had to be translated from the original language, which was Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament.

**SLIDE 5** So when studying the Bible it can be a good practice to compare the different Bible translations to fully explore the different ways the original language can be translated.

Here is a fun fact, if you are looking at a Bible version like the NIV or NKJV then it was translated by a group of theologians.

And if it is a paraphrase like the Message it was translated by one individual.

This is why I am not compelled to believe that there is one particular translation that is the only one that is correct or is more authoritative than others.

If someone says to you that the King James is the only authoritative version then they don’t understand where their Bible came from.

Truth be told, most of the translations are incredibly consistent with each other, with only minor differences that reflect the relevant usage of English at the time it was translated.

By comparing several different translations, it can often help us get a better sense of what the original Hebrew word really means.

When you look at this verse in comparison to other English translations, you will be surprised at what you will find.

**SLIDE 6** You see when you look at the different English translations, and we looked at 28 different ones, the phrase “longsuffering and abounding in goodness” can be translated in 15 slightly different ways,

In 28 translations, there are 15 different variations: (infographic)

* Slow to anger, abounding in love
* Slow to anger and filled with unfailing love
* Slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love
* Slow to anger, and abounding in loving devotion
* Slow to anger and abundant in kindness
* Slow to anger, and abounding in faithful love
* Slow to anger and filled with gracious love
* Slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love
* Slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness
* Who is not easily angered and who shows great love
* Longsuffering, and abounding in goodness
* Longsuffering, and abundant in mercy
* Longsuffering and very compassionate
* Patient, always faithful
* Patient and of much compassion

Look at all the English words that are used in order to translate this Hebrew phrase.

As you can see there isn’t one English word that can fully capture the full essence of the Hebrew word used in the original text!

It all boils down two basic characteristics of God that are not easy to translate into English

The first characteristic literally translates, “slow of angers.”

This characteristic in particular is going to be extremely important to Moses and the people of Israel.

Especially as they understand God in their current situation.

Not to long before this second encounter with God on Mount Sinai Moses stood in this same spot as God delivered the 10 Commandments to Him.

God Himself carved the stone tablets and used His finger to write the Ten Commandments on the stone.

These commandments were supposed to speak life and order into the lives of God’s people, providing boundaries to help life flourish.

Before Moses could even make it down the mountain with the tablets, he and God hear the sound of commotion below them in the Israelite camp.

It is such a commotion, that Joshua, Moses’ assistant, first thinks there is a war breaking out and he might need to get Moses and rush down the mountain to help.

But God has already told Moses what’s happening.

The people weren’t patient and had grown tired of waiting on what God was going to say.

So they threw a huge party, made a false god out of gold and they worshipped it, in order to grasp for control.

They threw a party to celebrate and honor this false god.

God had reason to be angry. God had many reasons to be angry.

The people forgot the miracles God had done to ensure their release from Egypt,

10 plagues upon their enemies, parted seas allowing safe passage, and swallowed up armies granting their freedom.

The people had forgotten that God had invited them to the wilderness to learn how to worship Him and find ultimate freedom.

The people had forgotten, or worse yet, just decided not to care.

God had reasons to be angry. There were many “angers” that could have been brewing in His heart.

However, God invites Moses back up the mountain with the desire to reveal all His glory to him, and snap a selfie for all of us to see!

He is the God who is “slow to angers” or the God who is patient with us when we do very stupid things.

**SLIDE 7** God is patient in the face of our failures.

(Example)

For those of you who have kids you know what it’s like to be patient with kids when they do the opposite of what we tell them,

You know the 15 times in a row with no sign of obedience in sight – but you choose to not take them off this planet because you love them.

Not because they somehow earned it, but because that is who God has called us to be as parents and that is how we want our kids to remember us.

Whether our kids obey our rules every time or break them 1,000 times, they are still our kids,

We still love them, and we still want to do whatever is necessary to patiently build our relationship with them. Right?

God has many justifiable reasons to be angry.

But God’s greater desire wasn’t to be angry with the Israelites, it was to build a relationship with them.

You know the great thing about God’s Selfie? It hasn’t changed.

God is still God. The writer of Hebrews in the New Testament says that God is the same **yesterday, today, and forever.**

He is consistent. You can rely on His steadfast character.

**SLIDE 8** The same God who was slow to anger with the Hebrew people is also slow to anger with us.

* Even when we do stupid things…….He is slow to anger
* Even when we forget what God has done for us……He is slow to anger
* Even when we choose not to care……He is slow to anger

God is still slow to anger and desires to be in a relationship with us.

All of that is really awesome about our God but let me pause to ask you, **how slow to anger are you**?

As believers, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and have His selfie implanted in us.

That means that God wants to be “slow to angers” in you. So you can be Slow to angers ..

-with your spouse

-with your kids

-with yourself.

The second characteristic revealed in this God Selfie says that God is “abundant of [‘*hess-ed*],*chesed*.”

This Hebrew word, [‘*hess-ed*], chesed, is at the root of why there are so many variations among the translations of this passage.

It is a very big word and makes it very difficult to translate this verse because there really isn’t an equivalent word in English or even in New Testament Greek that really conveys the power of this word.

God is bigger than our language can even describe!

I think part of the reason for that difficulty is because of the unique way the Hebrew language developed.

The story of the people of Israel is inseparable from the God of the people of Israel, for it was God that first called Abraham to leave Ur (modern day Bagdad) and go wherever God would lead him.

Abraham and his descendants needed a word that adequately represented the attitude or feelings that God showed toward His people over the long haul.

They needed a word that could convey hundreds of years’ worth of God’s inviting and providing for His people as they would dwell in a relationship with Him.

They needed a word that adequately described God’s justice, mercy, goodness, graciousness, truthfulness, covenant faithfulness, and steadfast, never ending, abiding, loving kindness.

The word they came up with was [‘*hess-ed*], *chesed.*

Quite literally, this word symbolized over 600 years’ worth of God’s interactions with His people.

[‘*hess-ed*], Chesed is all the feelings that God has toward his people, characterized by steadfast, covenant-keeping love in the face of Israel’s failures and short comings.

**SLIDE 9**  [‘*hess-ed*], Chesed says that no matter what, **God is with us**. God will never leave us nor forsake us. God will always pursue a relationship with us.

His unmerited favor goes before, comes along side, surrounds and goes ahead. God’s [‘*hess-ed*], Chesed, is His grace that is given through His ***longsuffering, and abounding in goodness.***

Those six letters make up one really big word.

But it is not something altogether foreign to us either.

I believe [‘*hess-ed*], Chesed is very similar to the kind of steadfast love that most parents have for their kids.

* Does love seek justice and issue discipline? Yes.
* Does love show mercy and forgive trespasses? Yes.
* Does love celebrate and encourage? Yes.
* Does love set standards and expectations for a relationship? Yes.
* Does love remain faithful even in the face of uncertainty? Yes.
* Does love speak the truth even when it is hard? Yes.
* Does love give clear expectations to avoid misunderstanding? Yes.
* Does love do whatever it takes to allow a relationship to flourish? Yes.

This is the God who is revealed to Moses in this beautiful Selfie.

The God who, no matter what, **is with us!**

This selfie is God’s promise, the standard that we can trust Him to live up to; this is who God really is!!!!!!!!!!!!!

And at this point, God has spent 600 years building a relationship with Israel to prove that His description about Himself is accurate and trustworthy.

If we jump another 400 years into the future, we see that this selfie God shared with Moses on the mountain is still famous among His people.

King David wrote a poem to be sung in worship to remind the people of just who God is in the midst of their mess.

See if His Psalm sounds familiar?

**SLIDE 10 Psalm 103:8 (ESV) – “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”**

The same words that God spoke about Himself on the mountaintop to Moses were the same words that worked their way into the experiences and hearts of God’s people 400 years later.

And through the Psalms, those same words had worked their way into their prayers and their worship.

The next 1,000 years until Christ was born continued to display a God who was slow to anger, and abounding in [‘*hess-ed*], Chesed.

A God who was patient and abounding in steadfast love.

In general, God’s people all agree that this is who God is – at least when things are going well in our lives.

As long as your health, relationships, and career are going well, it is pretty easy to believe that God is patient and abounding in steadfast love.

But when your life is in chaos, when it looks like God has forgotten about you, it is a lot harder to believe that God is slow to anger and has unwavering love for you.

That is why God delivered this selfie in the first place.

Moses was up on the mountain with God not because all was well, but because everything had fallen apart.

God’s people had rebelled against Him and worshipped an idol they made with their own hands.

They had given up on Moses and lost confidence in his leadership.

Everything was falling apart.

Moses went to God with a very important request.

Moses goes to God and says, you told me to lead these people, but I still don’t know who it is that is going with me.

You say you have called me by name, and that I am yours. If that is true, then teach me your ways so that I can know you, too.

Moses goes to God in the midst of the mess and says God, who are you? Show me.

The only way I am going to make it through this is if I have something solid to hold on to – show me who you really are.

Give me a picture that I can remember.

The God who is patient with you even when you ask questions you should know the answers to.

I am the God who is faithful even when you doubt me.

I am the God who is steadfast in my love, even when you desert me.

I am the God who will continue to work through you even when you don’t get it, and even when you fail.

**SLIDE 11** I am the God you can trust. I am Immanuel, God with you.

God revealed His selfie to Moses.

Then He sent His son Jesus to frame up the portrait so we can see the selfie in flesh and blood revealed to Philip and the other disciples.

And today, that same God who revealed Himself to Moses has come to us in Jesus and wants to take the selfie with you!

You are His favorite person!

He is the God who loves you enough to stick with you no matter how ugly the mess may be.

The God who is slow to anger and abounding in [‘*hess-ed*], Chesed*.* The God who is patient, and abounding in steadfast love.

**Closing**

For many of us, we believe these things about God in general, but we doubt that God would act this way toward us.

We believe God is patient, but we don’t think we deserve His patience.

We believe God abounds in steadfast love for everyone else, but we doubt that God really loves us that much.

We believe God is slow to anger and full of lovingkindness for others, but struggle to believe that God would have that attitude toward us.

**Hear the word of the Lord. God is patient and abounding in steadfast love.**

**SLIDE 12 No matter how big your mess, or the chaos in your life, or the failures of your past, nothing you can do can change who God is!**

God has given us His selfie, and nearly 4,000 years of experience from Abraham, to Moses, to Jesus, to US has proven His selfie true!

God is patient! God is abounding in steadfast love!

And God’s patience and steadfast love characterize His feelings about you!

He is the God who is with us, patiently working in our lives, loving us in steadfast, consistent, kind ways – and that will never change!

Don’t believe me, then believe this, remember in the beginning of this message that September 29th of this year begins Rosh Hashanah, the Day the Jews celebrate God revealing His selfie!

That is also known as beginning of the Feast of the Trumpets, this is the feast on the Jewish calendar that is believed to fulfilled with the second coming of Christ.

Many would say come Lord Jesus come already; however, the apostle peter reminds us:

**SLIDE 13 2 Peter 3:9 (NIV) 9  The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

Even in this God is demonstrating His long-suffering abounding in goodness and is patiently waiting with grace to receive you before the end!

Let that portrait burn into our mind!

You can rest in the character of God. You can trust God’s selfie!

**Let’s pray!**

**Response**

Today you can rest in God’s selfie. Let that truth settle into your heart and make its way into your worship like it did for King David in the Psalms.

You can pray at the altar and settle your questions and fears.

**SLIDE 14** It’s ok to ask the same question of God that Moses and Jesus’ disciples asked, **“God, reveal yourself to me, show me your glory, let me see your character with my own eyes.”**

You can go to the cross and pin the lies and fears that have caused you to doubt that God’s selfie could be true in your life.

God is patient and abounding in steadfast love – and he loves you today!

Let’s celebrate *The Goodness of God*! [This is the title of the response song]