**“I Know I AM” – Week 5 (Transcendent)**

**October 14/15, 2017**

Hey guys! Welcome back again, glad to have you all here. Alrighty, when I tell you to imagine your favorite animal, you have an animal in your head, right? You can’t help it. What’s the most amazing food you’ve had? Who’s the most amazing band you’ve heard? What’s the best summer memory you made? Who’s the best speaker to ever give a message in Northview Students?

**(Leaders Note: Share a personal story here about a time you realized something was bigger/faster/harder than you realized.)**

The point is, for something to be the most amazing, you have to have several things to compare it to! If I tell you about something you don’t know, you have to have a point of reference. Just like the example I gave, I had no way to measure what it would be like until I experienced it. I had no clue the pain/frustration/stress that awaited…

As humans, we naturally compare things to one another. Music. Food. Clothing. Phones. Cars…and the list goes on. What if there was something that had no comparison? Think about it. How would you explain what a satellite on Mars was to someone from so far back they didn’t even know about bicycles? Now…how do you think God fits on the scale?

Let’s take a look at part of Psalm 139 in the Old Testament. We are going to look at some of it and summarize some as well, but I encourage you guys to read the whole thing sometime this week. And then do it again. And again. And again! It’s King David talking about just how incredible God really is.

Psalm 139:1-6: “*You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”*

God knows you, the person sitting next to you, and everyone else on the planet, completely and entirely. His knowledge of his children is crazier than you can dream. Let’s read on:

Verses 17-18: “*How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.”* God’s knowledge and power can’t be understood. Even if we *try* to compare His thoughts to something tangible, like the grains of sand, we still can’t wrap our heads around it. It says that when we are awake, we are with God. He is in all places and always will be. When you move, sleep, drive, eat, go to church, go to school, play, act on stage…God is with you every time.

And yet, there are some people who think they’re bored with God. And they probably are. But they’re bored with the god they invented. They’re bored with a god you never find in Scripture. They’re bored with a god they’ve figured out completely.

Guys. The I AM is not boring. Do mountaintop sunrises bore you? Are pictures of deep-sea creatures boring? Is space exploration dull? God is the artist of it all. Does music ever speak to your soul? Does a little puppy make your heart melt? Does a newborn baby make your voice get all squeaky high? (It’s ok, we all do it.) God saw all of this before any of it was even a thought. He is graciously giving us more than we deserve, He has infinitely been and will always be, he is imminently woven into your new life with Christ, and he is incomparable and transcendent, above all we know and experience. Does this God sound boring to you?

Here’s what the Old Testament writer, Isaiah, says in Isaiah 55:8-9: *“‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.’”* He knows every part of this universe, every star in the Milky Way, every thought you will have in the next hour. He. Is. Big. That’s what our THP is all about!

**THP: God’s greatness surpasses all comparison.**

You might be thinking, “It’s great that God is so big, but I still have huge problems in my life. My parents hate one another. A friend or family member just died. I’ve watched movies, TV shows, videos on my phone, or listened to music that I shouldn’t have…and nobody knows about it.” But guys! That’s just it! It’s all the obstacles and personal sin that we bring with us that make God’s transcendence so incredible!

Sure, God is incomparable to us, but our mistakes and trouble is incomparable to God, too! He wins against your struggles. His greatness rules over our weaknesses. There’s a great quote by Erwin McManus: “Whoever tells the best story shapes the culture.” Well here’s some news: The story of the I AM **IS THE BEST STORY.** God’s story shapes the world…and it gets better! YOU are a piece of His storyline. You fit in the plot, and to get to His ending, you just follow His love.

Easier said than done, right? You aren’t the perfect character in the story. You mess up a lot, right? Turn to the person next to you and tell them, “You mess up a lot.” Ok, well that was a little rude. You guys love one another sometimes, too. Turn and tell them, “You are loving sometimes, too.”

Now let’s take Jesus. What makes Jesus’ love different from yours? You mess up. He doesn’t. It’s a love without letting down. Jesus’ transcendence, his perfection, makes his love a love like no other. His ways are higher than anything we can dream, and so is his love for you.

The transcendence of God is an awe-inspiring thing. It is what makes you feel like a speck of dust in a massive universe, a tiny player in a game where God makes all the moves he wants, whenever he wants. But his transcendence is also what makes his comfort and love for you better than anything you’ve ever known and anything you could ever measure. It is what he wants to pour out for you to experience deeper and fuller than any other thing you have experienced before. Paul says it well, God does more than we could ever dream:

In the New Testament, Ephesians 3:20-21 says, “*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”*

Let’s go back and run through who God is again, and look at how God’s transcendence can be seen in each part of his nature. We’ve looked at him to find out who he is the past four weeks, right? What did we discover? Week 1 was about the I AM. Remember the *Prince of Egypt* movie clip? All of the things God has made, knows, and creates can only exist because God is keeping them all around. How can you compare God to something else when *everything* else needs God just to exist at all? Are you guys tracking? Anything you compare to God wouldn’t even be around if God didn’t create it and maintain it.

**THP: God is.**

Gracious. Week 2 was on the crazy grace that God gives us. The grace that keeps you from judgment you have asked for by your choices. The grace that keeps you from the fallout of all your stupidity. All your lies. All your secret sins. The grace that saves you from your guilt and shame. Our God’s grace transcends any kindness or gift you will ever receive from people.

**THP: We are completely surrounded and covered by God’s grace!**

Then was week 3...the infinite God we serve. And this is so simple: what, beyond God, is unlimited? What else is *always* faithfully loving and helping you? The size, the grace, the praise, the creativity, the power, and the love of God can’t be measured, because they have no stopping point. He cares for you with a love and grace and power that goes further than any ocean floor or space satellite picture we’ll ever see. He is transcendent over everyone and everything because he is infinite.

**THP: The quantity of God’s infinite qualities can’t be understood… and that’s amazing!**

And just last week we learned about the immanence of God. The truth that God is here right now, sitting with you in this room and going with you through the school day. The fact that God cares about you enough to give you himself. He is present in your pain and depression, and your happiness and joy. And, yes, he might just be singing in the car with you when you jam out to some Taylor Swift. Just open your heart and enter into His presence.

**THP: God is near and active.**

I know that’s a ton to try and wrap your head around, but our God is a TON to wrap our heads around. God is incredible. There’s only one way to summarize Him. God is I AM. Just like this series title says, you have the opportunity to say that you know I AM. Not just that you believe in a god. Not just that you know God loves you, but that you know a self-sufficient, gracious, infinite, immanent, and transcendent God whose love for you is just as amazing as He is. Have you been following I AM or have you been inventing a smaller, softer god? In this trade, you give all your broken self and He gives all of his perfection.