

## God Is

If those knocking on doors in the Lebanon area Wednesday night follow the predictions we will see several young girls in long blonde wigs. They will be imitating the popular imaginary pop star "Hanna Montana". Part of the attraction of this character is that there is more to Hannah than what you see. As Hannah Montana, complete with wig, she's a pop star, enjoying all that that life offers, yet she is also, Miley Stewart, a normal high school student, with friends, classes and none of the attention that accompanies Hannah's fame. She is what you see and more, she has the best of both worlds.

Along with either the blonde Hannah or brunette Miley, expect one or more transformers to also come knocking on Wednesday night. Transformers are "aliens" who take the shape of vehicles, cars, trucks, planes, etc. where on earth until they "transform" to show their power and true identity. They too appeal to that in children of all ages who love that there is often more that what is first seen.

As the church began to develop one of the challenges facing the early disciples was helping others to understand that Jesus was more than what was first seen. Convincing others the reality that this man who was known by some and heard about by many more was also God of all creation took more than words, it took faith; commitment and a continual focus on God. In the passage shared this morning Paul names a great many of the attributes of God. Paul names them, one by one, and celebrates that God is – God Is all we know of God to be and more. Paul encourages those listening to see both the humanity of Jesus and the mystery that is God alone. Paul was speaking to people who had become self focused, people who worried about the "costume" of their everyday, earthly life.

I suspect for most it is not a deliberate decision to live with a focus more on self than on God. Life can be pretty hectic. Family, church, work, school, sports, and hobbies can all seem to overwhelm us at times. For children, they hear a lot more pop stars and super heroes as role models, than encouragement to surrender self and live in the image of Jesus. For anyone, regardless of age, it is hard to continually remember that it is not all about us. As we stand on the bring of trick-or-treat, All Saints and all the upcoming holiday season, let's prepare by celebrating what Paul proclaimed that

God is Personal - God chose the people of Israel to be God's people. Throughout Scripture and history we see God interacting personally with creation. It began in the garden and continues to the end of time. Jesus word of encouragement that "I am with you always" reminds all that God is personal. God met Paul on the road, Peter at the seaside, and death at the cross. God knows the number of hairs on your head and knit you together to be a unique, unrepeatable masterpiece of God.

God is our Deliverer - Paul reminds them that it was God who brought God's people out of Egypt. God is the one who did the delivering. They could not have done it on their own. Only God could deliver them. Just as only God can deliver us, just as only God can bring us from an unfulfilling, hectic, self-centered life into life with meaning, purpose and awareness of God's presence.

God is Patient– Knowing that God is all power, we know that God could have simply destroyed those who were disobedient. God didn't – God doesn't. Paul says God "put up with their ways". We are told in Scripture that God is not slow in keeping God's promises, yet God exercises patience so that all might choose to enter and life in a right relationship with God and others.

God is Just – So often it seems as though the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. God however is just and God will bring judgment on those in the past, present and future.

God is Generous – God is the giver of all good things. Paul reminds of God's promise to give Israel cities they did not build and land they have not labored for. One of the wonders of the All Saints tradition which we will participate in next Sunday is in naming how God has worked and created the church as we know it today through the faith, service and love of the saints who have gone before.

God is Righteous – God is truly righteous and desires that we live and hold one another accountable to actions and attitudes which are right with God's plan and purposes.

God is Tolerant– Many times we ask for the wrong things in life. Israel wanted a king when God desired that they understand that God was their King. . God allowed them to have one even though it was not what God desired for them, and God continued working to draw them close through their desires. God tolerates much as we grow to know and understand God's will.

God is Faithful – Even with all the human failings and disobedience God always points us back in the direction God desires for us. David's life is an example of many, where there are times of faithfulness and times of selfishness, with God opening to door for repentance, for turning around each time we stray.

God is Savior – Jonathan Edwards said that one cannot be saved until he has experienced the terror of being lost. God did not have to provide a Savior but in God's infinite love and mercy God chose to be that Savior for us.

God is Holy – God is completely other than we are. Scripture says God ways are not our ways and God's thoughts are not our thoughts. There is cause for death in us but there was none in God, as revealed in Jesus the Christ. Christ was Holy as God is Holy.

God is Resurrection – We cannot overlook the power of the resurrection. We know that earthly life will end, and that is is resurrected life which is eternal. Without the resurrection we would have no hope, only wishful thinking.

God is Merciful - Paul quotes Isaiah 55:3, the sure mercy of David is the term used to describe God's everlasting covenant with us. Praise God that we are the recipients of God's mercy and not judgment.

God is Forgiver– Guilt is a powerful thing but with forgiveness comes release. God is the great forgiver. God not only allows but encourages "do overs", and provides the power needed to be transformed.

God is Justifier – The word justify has taken on a new life and meaning as computers allow the typist to “justify” either or both margins. When we are justified God’s aligns us with God’s will.

God is Awesome– This word became “popular” a few years ago and has been used for way too many things that truly aren’t awesome. In this passage Paul declares to those who despise God that they wouldn’t believe what God had done for them even if it were shown, highlighted, to them. The very mention of God should inspire awe and fear. God is truly awesome.

So while the world talks about Hannah, Transformers, and other’s that promise something more, let’s join Paul in celebrating, intimating and sharing how truly God meets our deepest yearning for all that is more.