

Challenging Misconceptions About God | John 8:28 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To come up with a practical way that being loved by God by what he did for the cross should change the way we live.

Sermon Reminder: Keith started his sermon mentioning George Buttrick, a former chaplain at Harvard, who recalled how students would come into his office and say, "I don't believe in God." Buttrick's response would be, "Sit down and tell me what kind of God you don't believe in. I probably don't believe in that God either." Keith points out several ways Jesus corrects our common misconceptions about God.

Icebreaker: Have you ever had misconceptions of a place corrected after having gone there?

Discussion

Keith listed four common misconceptions about God:

1. The Cop Around the Corner: God cares about our keeping the rules.
 2. Soul Cycle: God is spiritual energy that we can tap into.
 3. Goop: Being spiritual is about purging us of toxins and focusing on wellness.
 4. Lego Blocks: God is whomever you choose to make him.
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1. How do you see these misconceptions in our culture today? Have you had or even still carry any of these?

Transition: How can we truly know what God is like? Is it up to each one of us to figure it out for ourselves?

Read:

John 1:18

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

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John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

2. What has God done to show us what he's like?

Read:

John 8:21-28

²¹ Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come."

²² This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?"

²³ But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins."

²⁵ "Who are you?" they asked.

"Just what I have been telling you from the beginning," Jesus replied. ²⁶ "I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world."

²⁷ They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me."

Note: Dave is circling back to this passage next week to dive more into the conversation about dying in your sins.

3. What misconceptions do those who are conversing with Jesus have?
4. What is the confirmation that Jesus really is God incarnate, the I Am become flesh?
5. Why is the cross the best place to see what God is like?

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Read this list of verses of what the cross shows God is like:

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Philippians 2:8

And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Hebrews 2:17-18

¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

6. According to those verses, how does the cross correct the following misconceptions:
 - a. If God loves us he would give us what we want?
 - b. God is proud and wants to use us for his own good?
 - c. God is aloof and doesn't really know what we go through?

7. What misconception about how God feels about you does the cross correct?

Sharing and Prayer:

For time's sake, consider splitting in half or smaller groups then have everyone share a way they want to live differently this week in light of how God loves us on the cross.

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- Do we need to have a time to express anger, frustration, or disappointment with God that we have been stuffing because we think God would be mad at us for expressing it?
- Is there some way we have been trying to earn our worthiness to be loved...whether with God, through work, through relationships rather than accepting God's love for us on the cross?
- Is there some way we should be kind and gentle to others because God has been kind and gentle to us?

Have everyone pray for the person on their left in light of what they shared.