

WEDNESDAY MORNING A BRIDGE WE CAN'T CROSS

Okay, we're going to start out this morning with a question that might hurt your brain a little.....

Who is God? What is He like? Explain Him. _____

The Bible gives us a really clear picture of who God is. In fact, one of the Bible's "favorite" words for God is "holy". Read the following definition of the word "holy" and then put it in your own words on the lines provided.

Holy - fundamentally signifies "separated", separated from sin and therefore consecrated, one with purity, majesty and glory, more than sacred, more than worthy/honorable, more than pure/free from defilement... *

Although the entire description of what it means that God is "holy" is important, we are going to focus on the fact that it signifies that He is separate, separated from sin entirely.

This sounds pretty different from us, huh? God's nature is everything that is loving, good, right, just, and true; our nature is all that is wrong, vile, sinful, offensive, and selfish.

Since God is holy, which involves Him being separate from all sin, that means that it only takes one sin to cause God to be separated from us. He is so holy that nothing unholy can be in His presence. In the same way that Adam and Eve lost the immediate presence of God due to their choice to sin, we are separated from God because of our sin. We cannot reach Him on our own, which is a big problem; we've already established how much we need Him!

Imagine being on the edge of a incredibly high cliff. You are alone; everything you want or need is on the other side: your family and friends, food and drink, all entertainment, everything you own. You cannot cross the chasm; it's impossible. You cannot go around; it's infinite. What is your only hope of getting across? What would it take? _____

Someone on the other side would have to love you enough and want you to be with them enough to do something about it. How is that what Jesus did for us? _____

Many people choose to ignore the way of escape that Jesus has provided; they try to cross the canyon on their own. Spiritually speaking, a lot of people try to be very "good" and they think that surely that will get them to God. In the New Testament, there was a group of men called the Pharisees who Jesus talked about a lot. They were very "good" men, if you were determining goodness by what they did and did not do. They were very careful to obey the law by doing all the things they were supposed to do; they had even made up some extra laws of their own to follow!

They were also extremely careful about not doing any of the things the law had forbidden. They were so proud of how “good” they were that they were very quick to pass judgment on other people.

Check out what Jesus has to say to these “good men” in Matthew 23:25-28:

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside will also be clean.

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”

What did Jesus have to say to the Pharisees? Did he approve or disapprove of them? What does he say they are like?

Often, even if we’re Christians, we try to get close to God or make God happy by being “good” on the outside. The problem is that we never deal with the sin in our hearts. We tidy up on the surface, but our insides are still filthy and stained.

If you aren’t a Christian this morning, think about that chasm that separates you from God. You cannot cross it on your own; it’s impossible. The only way to get to God is through Jesus Christ. His death on the cross was for you, and it built a bridge by which you can cross the canyon. There is no other way.

If you are a Christian this morning, thank Jesus for dying to get you to God! Think about what it cost Him and how lost you and I would be without Him! Also, ask Him to show you places that you’ve cleaned up on the outside, but haven’t dealt with sin in your heart. Ask Him to cleanse you of the sin in you and change you from the inside out.

*(from www.blueletterbible.com lexicon and Vine’s Bible dictionary)