

Theology: What the Bible says about the things that matter most

Message #2 (6/16/13): God (Does God exist? How do you explain the Trinity? How well can you know God?)

Questions:

1. "Some Christians assume that knowing doctrine (studying theology) and practical living are competing interests" (Michael Horton). Do you know Christians who think this way? Do you or have you thought this way? Why?
2. When you have a deep sense of gratitude for something no human gave you (e.g., a sunset, health, life, mountains) do you feel inclined to worship? If so, where do you think that desire comes from?
3. The Bible says that the heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1). What could help you to recognize that glory in creation/nature?
4. Are you personally confident in the "case" for God that exists from General Revelation (see next page)? Do you feel like you could discuss this with someone who isn't uncertain about whether or not God exists?
5. What are some examples of how we see "unity and distinction" in everyday life? What things in life especially delight you when you see diverse parts functioning in harmonious ways?
6. How could a good understanding of the unity without uniformity in the Trinity help marriages? Fellowship in the church? Appreciation for different cultures? Missions? Music? Sports?
7. Does your inability to fully understand the doctrine of Trinitarianism cause you to doubt or be frustrated? Why would it make sense for something so central to the nature of God to be well beyond our ability to fully figure out?
8. Do you tend to err on the side of assuming that you've got God all figured out, or are you more likely to think He is so big and mysterious that He can never really be known? How has the tension between God's incomprehensibility and knowability helped you think about knowing God?
9. What are things you can do to cultivate a heart of wonder for God's greatness?
10. Does it frustrate or worry you to know that you will never have God all figured out? If so, what is your thinking or character that may be leading to this?
11. Do you ever doubt God's love for you because He has not given answers to some of your questions? Does the fact that He keeps some things secret (Deut. 29:29) make you feel like He doesn't respect or care for you? How should an understanding of God's wisdom change those attitudes?
12. Pray this for the one another, your Growth Group, and SOMA: 2 Peter 1:2-3 (ESV) -
2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.

Sermon Details/Specifics:

General Revelation:

Given by God to all people at all times. This revelation is found in both the external creation and in internal human experience.

Arguments for God from General Revelation:

1. (external argument) Cosmological Argument - (cosmos = world) starts from the existence of the world and argues for an ultimate cause (i.e., a Creator).
2. (external argument) Teleological Argument - (telos = goal) starts from the nature of the world and argues for the nature of the Creator (i.e., a Designer). Voltaire (French Enlightenment writer from early 18th century) - "If a watch proves the existence of a watchmaker but the universe does not prove the existence of a great architect, then I consent to be called a fool."
3. (internal argument) Personality - how can personal come from impersonal? Points to a personal creator.
4. (internal argument) Beauty - while subjective, universal aesthetic appreciation for beauty points to an artist.
5. (internal argument) Universal sense of right and wrong. Points to a divine judge who created us and instills a sense of morality in humans. ("Torturing babies for fun is wrong.")
6. (internal argument) Meaning - deep longing for significance, meaning. Points to a God who created our lives to have meaning. CS Lewis - "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in the world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world" (*Mere Christianity*).
7. Religions Experience - the universal need to worship someone or something. Even Atheism is often a "religion".

Special Revelation:

God's historical supernatural activities, the Bible, and definitively in Jesus Christ.

Passages on the Incomprehensibility of God:

Psalms 145:3; Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33-34; Deuteronomy 29:29

Passages on the Knowability of God:

Jeremiah 9:23-24; 1 Corinthians 2:2; Galatians 6:14; Philippians 3:10; John 17:3