

What Type of God?

John 20:24-31

3-31-2024

during our sunrise service across the street earlier this morning, Brent read from Isaiah 53
a particularly appropriate passage to read on Easter, especially in the middle of a cemetery

written hundreds of years before Jesus came, inspired by the Holy Spirit, Isaiah described our Lords suffering and sacrifice.

it is a reminder that we now have life and hope and a future because of what Jesus did on Calvary

he sacrificed his own life for ours, died in our place, and took the penalty for our sin upon himself.

Isaiah speaks of him, taking up our infirmities, carried our sorrows, was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed... for the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all...and bore the sin of many.

but it's Easter, and Easter is about more than Jesus' suffering and death
Easter is the third day, resurrection day, when we not only remember his sacrifice and death, we celebrate the empty tomb
Easter is when he conquered both sin and death.

Ralph Sockman – Something happened on easter Day which made Christ more alive on the streets of Jerusalem forty days after his crucifixion than on the day of His triumphal entry. a false report might last forty days but the church which was founded on a risen Christ has lasted for 21 centuries.

as his followers, we are people of the empty tomb and because death couldn't hold him, it won't be able to hold us either
which means we don't live in fear but in hope of the future

as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:14, just as God raised Jesus from the dead, by his power he will raise us also
and again in chapter 15, when Jesus returns, death will be swallowed up in victory and that which is mortal will be replaced by immortality.

because it's Easter, we need to hear not just of his suffering and death, but also of the empty tomb and his victory over death.

for convenience's sake, we may separate Good Friday and easter Sunday on our calendars, but the crucifixion and resurrection go together as a single event and really cannot be separated

as Paul told wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Christ died for our sins in accordance with scriptures, and that he was buried, **AND** that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.

which is why even in communion, as we remember his broken body and shed blood, Jesus said whenever we eat thee bread and drink the cup, we are proclaiming his death until he comes = RESURRECTION
he is not dead but alive and will come back for his people
communion is a reminder of both his death and his resurrection victory to be culminated in his return

I want us to do something we haven't done in a long time.

I want us to read together the Easter story as found in Luke 24:1-7

“On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ”” (Luke 24:1–7)

I once heard a man talking very positively about Jesus and the Bible. He admired Jesus' life and teachings, his miracles and acts of compassion, confessing his own belief and faith in the Lord. But then he came to the Easter story where he confessed great difficulty accepting certain parts of it.

unlike the objections so many have to the gospel, his difficulty had nothing to do with belief in the resurrection and empty tomb. As he put it, God can do anything.

Instead, his opposition was to the traditional understanding of the crucifixion and the idea that God would send Jesus to suffer and die on the cross in our place. as he put it, "What kind of parent would sacrifice their own child?" What type of God would sacrifice his own son?

it does raise an important question for us to reflect on this Easter morning,

- **what type of God do we worship?**

What type of God would send his own son to die for others, especially sinners such as you?

what type of God, as Paul put it in Romans 5:10, would reconcile us while we were Gods enemies and in open rebellion against him, by sending his son to take our place on the cross?

what type of God indeed!

it must have been on the minds of the disciples, especially after his resurrection they had seen him arrested, crucified, and buried in a borrowed tomb

John 20:19-23 says that after his crucifixion, his followers were afraid that they would be next and the authorities would be coming after them. So they met together behind locked doors.

Still in shock they wondered what they were going to do now.

but then on the third day, Easter, it says Jesus suddenly appeared before them, talked with them, and even showed them the scars on his hands and feet to prove that it really was him, risen from the dead.

but there was a problem.

one of them, Thomas, was not there

he didn't see the risen Jesus and therefore refused to believe them.

picking up in verse 24 of John 20 in one of the most amazing confessions of faith to be found anywhere, the scripture says,

“Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.” A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:24–31)

what an incredible confession; **MY LORD AND MY GOD!**

what a God he is

to quote one writer,

Here was someone who bore the marks of defeat. Standing in front of Thomas was a vulnerable one, one who had been beaten and put down like a dog.

The staggering confession that fell from Thomas' lips was far more than simply, So, you're alive after all!

It was more than, You are the Messiah and my Lord! It was more than, Now I believe. and as profound as it was, it was even more than Thomas identifying Jesus as God.

It is the kind of God that stood before Thomas that baffles the mind!

we might be able to accept a God who can walk on water and then calm a storm and raging sea with just a word.

we can accept a God who performs miracles, who can heal the sick and drive out demons, and even raise the dead.

we can accept a God who turns water into wine and multiplies bread and fish to feed thousands.

after all, aren't these what gods are supposed to be able to do?
to set aside natural laws and do the impossible?

But God on a cross?

a God who sheds his own life blood for the very ones who hate him enough to put him there?

a suffering servant rather than conquering king?

that kind of God just doesn't make sense

how can you nail God to a cross?

and why would he bother to die for lost humanity?

that kind of God baffles the mind

such a God becomes both foolishness to Greeks and a scandal or stumbling block for the Jews.

several years ago, Oprah brought several women onto her show to talk about the topic of, Having Affairs with Married Men. Each of these women were currently having affairs and were asked to share comments about how they felt about it. One of the women responded very

positively, saying that she was in a long-standing affair with a married man and was very happy with it.

when the audience had a chance to respond, someone asked her about the morality of it. instantly the woman became defensive and took offence saying, wait a minute. I'm a Christian, but I want everyone to know that I don't let my personal life and my religion interfere with one another. Then she added, I believe in a God who wants me to be happy. and if this man makes me happy, then God approves of the relationship.

In other words, she believed in the type of God who exists for her and to make her happy.

with such a god, there is little room for one who would go to the cross for our sin. who would sacrifice himself to save us.

but that is not the type of God who stood before Thomas so long ago nor is it the type of God whom we worship here on Easter morning.

quoting the God of the Towel by Jim McGuiggan,

A God who tears mountain ranges to shreds, who rolls out light years of space like a man laying carpet, a God who flings galaxies into empty space and lay oceans in their place with an eyedropper—that kind of God, we think earns the name God.

But a God who will be bundled into a crowded room with spittle falling from his beard and red welts marking His face? A God like that? A God who stands silent before an insolent and pathetic little Roman governor, a God who listens patiently to the ranting of an ecclesiastical hypocrite? A God like that? A God who blushes as he is stripped naked for crucifixion, who winces as spikes gouge their way into his feet and hands? A God like that?

A God who delivers himself into the hands of stupid, self-serving, brutal men—this is the kind of God who stood before Thomas!

the man asked what type of God would sacrifice his own son.

the woman wanted a God who existed for her and her happiness

But it's easter and we ask what type of God is he

He is the type of God who doesn't just sit back and talk about things like love and mercy and forgiveness and grace he demonstrates them

He is the type of God who loves so much that he gave us his one and only son so that we wouldn't have to spend eternity apart from him.

the type of God who Paul told the Romans that while we were still powerless, sent Christ to die for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly die. BUT God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

he is the type of God who loves so much he sees past our pettiness and self-centered ways to deal with the root cause of our separation and alienation, with sin itself

sin which Jesus took upon himself because that was the only way to truly be rid of it.

he is the type of God who shows that love isn't just a warm feeling towards people or something to just talk about, it is something he is!

his every action is an expression of his love

Jesu said there is no greater love than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. then he went out and did it on Calvary.

and he is the type of God that even death and a tomb cannot hold

That's Easter

and that is the one whom we worship and remember as we prepare to partake in Communion together

remembering his body, his blood, given for us. But also his resurreion as we continue to do it until he comes