

## INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF REVIEW.

- A. Scripture text: [Isaiah 40:18-25](#).
- B. This morning I preached the first half of the lesson "Your God Is Too Small." This sermon will complete the latter half.
- C. I have also prepared a lesson called, "God Is..." which will focus on the greatness, character and wisdom of God. I hope to preach those lessons beginning next Sunday.
- D. Tonight, five more concepts of God that are much too small to be compared to His greatness:
  1. The heavenly escape hatch.
  2. The managing director.
  3. The fictional God.
  4. The perennial grievance.
  5. Mr. Doom and Gloom.
- E. **Brief Review.**  
The 5 misconceptions of God as talked about this morning were:
  1. The resident policeman or cosmic cop.
  2. The parental hangover.
  3. The gentle, grand old man.
  4. Mr. Meek and Mild.
  5. The God of absolute perfection.

## I. FIRST, **THE HEAVENLY ESCAPE HATCH.**

- A. Critics have said that religion is a form of escapism. In essence, it is thought that "with all of the problems and demands in this life, adults long to return to the comfort and security of a loving parent--whom he calls God.
- B. And I must freely admit there is some validity to the charge because there are those who only practice their Xianity when trouble comes. God becomes their convenient little "escape hatch" to help one cope with life.
- C. But there is a big difference between having God as an "escape hatch" and having God as a "refuge" in times of trials. The escape hatch is only used in times of crisis, while the refuge is used daily, as a place of continual residence.
- D. True Xianity is not an escape from troubles but is a "system" by which one can learn to live above their troubles. Xianity is not a magic "cure all", but is a "cure all" to those who grow and mature in it.
- E. When we look at history and see what Xians endured because of their faith we see no hint of escapism! The same Son of God who said "Come unto Me" also said, "Go out in My Name." True Xianity not only passively comforts the afflicted, but gives strength and courage carry out its mission (1Tim. 1:5).  
[But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.](#)

## II. **SECOND, THE MANAGING DIRECTOR.**

- A. This view of God is to think that the God who is responsible for the terrifying vastness of the universe cannot possibly be interested in the lives of the minute specks of consciousness which exist on this insignificant planet.
- B. Whatever a man's reaction may be to the idea of the terrific "size" of God, the point is that this huge God who is busy running the world does not have time for or interest in me.
- C. It becomes impossible in this view to see the vastness of God and the minute attention to every detail at the same time. And why not, we see many managers who have such a load of care that they do

not have time to pay any attention to any one individual but must always act in reference to the group as a whole.

- D. Ex.: "I met the CEO once but I am such a nothing as compared to what he is, he doesn't know or remember me."
- E. By viewing God as "a managing director" who is out of touch with the individuals under his care it becomes easy to think that God is too busy to notice me and my life so I will just live it as a choose. He will never notice my life or my sin.
- F. But another tragedy of this view is that if one believes in the vastness of God making Him incapable of knowing and taking care of the details, puts one adrift. Believing there is no particular guidance for their everyday life from God they sacrificed to the winds and find themselves at the mercy of the chaos around them.
- G. We ask ourselves, "What am I supposed to do with my life?" but feel we cannot turn to God because he is too busy with other things.
- H. But on the positive side: One of the great things about our universe is not only its size, but also of its smallness. God is the god of galaxies but also of the molecule, atom, proton, neutron, and electron.
- I. God cares about each of the 5 billion plus souls on this planet. So much so, that He calls everyone by name (Eph. 3:14-15). See also Mt. 6:26; 12:30.  
*(Eph 3:14-15) For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,...*  
*(Mt 6:26) "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"*  
*(Mt 12:30) "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters."*
- J. This type of misconception has trouble handling the thought of how God can answer a million different prayers at the same time! But He does!

### III. **THIRD, THE FICTIONAL GOD.**

- A. Simply said, because fiction is a "mirror held up to view life" it portrays that there is no god at all. Any belief in deity is more fictitious than the book or movie itself!
- B. There are three main ways that fiction (movies, books, or theater) can mislead us and greatly affect the concept we hold of God and His operations in human life.
- C. First, fiction ignores God.
  - 1. A vast amount of fiction presents life as though there were no God at all, and men and women have no religious side to their personalities whatsoever.
  - 2. We see (in the movies and film) people exhibit the most delightful qualities and surmount incredible difficulties, make the most noble sacrifices, and achieve the utmost in happiness--all without the slightest reference to God.
  - 3. Any resemblance between the celluloid providence and the real actions of God in human affairs is purely coincidental.
- D. Second, fiction willfully misrepresents religion.
  - 1. It's not the duty of a fiction writer to promote Xianity, but it is unfair to present the church and Xianity as something to be ridiculed. That's not a true "mirror of life."
  - 2. It is true that some in the name of religion have acted as bigots, ignorant life, or even a smug hypocrite, but that is not the only depiction of Xianity! It is, however, the only portrayal usually seen in books and movies.
- E. Third, fiction manipulates providence.
  - 1. The fiction writer is in the position of being "god" when it comes to the actions and outcomes of the characters he has invented.
  - 2. But to view the role of God as the same as what is portrayed as fate in the books and movies is to greatly distort the true nature of the heavenly Father.
  - 3. Just because things usually work out in the end (in the books and movies), doesn't mean that every episode in life will always have its "Hollywood ending" (Isa. 55:9).

“For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

- F. God is to be known through His word. Only there can we get the true story line of how God has worked in the world and in the lives of His people (Heb. 1:1-2; Rom. 10:17).

(**Heb 1:1-2**) God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, **2** in these last days has spoken to us in *His* Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

(**Rom 10:17**) So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

#### IV. **FOURTH, THE PERENNIAL GRIEVANCE.**

- A. To many, the mental images of God are a blur of disappointment. The attitude is to the effect that “God is the One I trusted, but He let me down.”

- B. Let me quote from J. B. Phillip’s (page 48-49):

“Any suggestion of obeying or following God can be more than countered by another glance at the perennial Grievance.

Such a god is, of course, in the highest degree inadequate. It is *next* to impossible for people who have persuaded themselves that God has failed *in their life* to worship and serve *Him*. If they do it will only be in a grudging and perfunctory (*indifferent*) spirit. What has usually happened to such people is that they have set up in their minds what they think God ought or ought not to do, and when He apparently fails to toe their particular line they feel a sense of grievance.... God will inevitably appear to disappoint the man who is attempting to use Him as a convenience, a prop, or comfort, for his own plans.... It is not a question of what God could have done but a question of what He has done. God will inevitably appear to disappoint the man who is attempting to use Him as convenience, a prop, or a facilitator of his own plans.

- C. These kind of people want a world that always sees the good man rewarded and the bad man punished. Full reward and vindication are only to be known in heaven (Rom. 12:19-21).

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. **20** “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS UPON HIS HEAD.” **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- D. We need to realize God knows more than we do and He works all things for our good if we will let Him (Hab. 1:1-2, 5; Isa. 55:9; Mt. 7:11; Rom. 8:28; Jas. 1:17).

(**Hab. 1:1-5**) The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw. **2** How long, O LORD, will I call for help, And Thou wilt not hear? I cry out to Thee, “Violence!” Yet Thou dost not save.... **5** “Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! Because *I* am doing something in your days-- You would not believe if you were told.”

(**Isa 55:9**) “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

(**Mt 7:11**) “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

(**Rom 8:28**) And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

(**Jas 1:17**) Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.

- E. God is not the perennial grievance but the perennial provider!

#### V. **FIFTH, MR. DOOM AND GLOOM.**

- A. While in college, in the mid- '70s, I was in the basement of EIU Student Services bldg., when one of my professors said that he was not going to follow Jesus because “His way was no fun.”

- B. In the introduction to the movie, *Bull Durham*, one of the characters said she had tried Xianity but gave it up because of too much guilt.

- C. The point of these stories is: to some, God is almost entirely a negative force in their lives. God is known to them as Mr. Doom-and-Gloom.
- D. Because of such a view, it is only by strenuous loyalty that can one maintain some sort of faithfulness. Those who grew up on “hell fire and damnation sermons” do not get the chance to admire and love and worship the One who is overwhelmingly splendid and beautiful. Their lives are cramped, narrow and joyless because their god is the same.
- E. The “funny thing” about all of this is that the gospel is good news! If God was “Mr. Doom and Gloom” He would not have sent X to earth, given fellowship and forgiveness, and the promise eternal life.
- F. Instead of Mr. Doom-and-Gloom, God should be called Mr. Hope-and-Happiness. See Jn 10:10; 1Jn. 1:5; Eph. 3:14-21.

**(Jn 10:10)** “The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have *it* abundantly.

**(1Jn 1:5)** And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

**(Eph 3:14-21)** For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, **16** that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God. **20** Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, **21** to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

### **CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.**

- A. We have looked at 5 more erroneous concepts of God.
- B. In the next couple of weeks, I will be talking about the wonderful God of the Bible. There will be 4 main attributes of God that will be highlighted:
  1. God as the great Communicator.
  2. God as the great Redeemer.
  3. God as the great Provider.
  4. God as the great Judge.
- C. Heaven’s invitation is open, do not spurn it.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.