

Discovering God: Part 3- The Tension

I. Me

- A. Welcome/Online/So what about?
- B. Part 3 of Discovering God
 - 1. God was for us from the beginning of time
 - 2. Peace with God is not that complicated... it comes from one single act of trust.
 - 3. And that sounds good. Makes us feel warm... God loves us and is for us... all true things.

II. WE

- A. But then we start digging deeper and come across stuff like The Battle of Jericho (Kid song)- **Joshua 6:20-21**
 - 1. Unbelievable carnage and brutality.
 - 2. How do we balance the God we've been talking about with the God that would be a part of this?
 - 3. It's one of the reasons many people reject the God of the Bible.
 - 4. So that leaves me and anyone who says God is a God of love with some explaining to do.
 - 5. I'm not going to insult your intelligence and give you a quick easy answer b/c there really isn't one.
 - 6. It's a very uncomfortable and very real tension.
 - 7. **Discovering God is not always a comfortable experience.**
 - 8. The God who was and is for you and all of humanity is also a God that can be terrifying.
 - 9. He's a God who hates evil and loves people.
 - 10. A God who judges and at the same time a God who forgives.
 - 11. **God is a loving and he judges sin.**

12. So what do we do with this?

13. We need to get the whole picture of why this battle took place.

14. **Genesis explanation...**

III. BACKGROUND

- A. god created everything perfect... then Sin
- B. 650 yrs before Jericho... God made a promise to Abraham.
 - 1. He would be the father of a great nation
 - 2. He would be blessed by God
 - 3. Out of his descendents would come the one to rescue humanity from the mess of sin
 - 4. His descendents (Israelites- named after A's grandson Jacob/Israel) would inherit the land of Canaan... called the Promised Land b/c it was promised by God to Abraham.
 - 5. BUT...
 - 6. God said it wouldn't be easy and it wouldn't be quick- **Gen 15:13-16**
 - 7. Descendents end up moving to Egypt
- C. Pharaoh scared, enslaved, More than 300 yrs.
- D. God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites and gave him the Laws that created not just a family, but a nation.
 - 1. When Moses' time was done, God gave Joshua the task of leading this new nation into the land he had promised them.
- E. Just one problem...
 - 1. The Promised Land wasn't empty... other nations were busy growing, building cities, cultivating the land, and creating their own distinct cultures.

2. So when the Israelites got to the edge of Canaan they discovered a huge OCCUPIED sign.
- F. So God commands his nation to go conquer and destroy these cultures...
1. Immediate picture of genocide
 2. Doesn't the idea of invading and taking other nation's land seem so wrong?

3. But there is a bit more detail that might help...

- G. In God's promise to Abraham... there was this sentence- **Gen 15:16**.
1. These cultures were pretty barbaric.
 2. Little regard for human life and dignity... child sacrifice, incest, institutionalized sexual abuse of women...
 3. The cultures were so evil that God decided it was best to erase them completely.
 4. The cultures were unredeemable.... Not the people.
- H. The Phrase "full measure" shows that God was actually giving the people time and opportunity to change their ways.
1. "Had not yet"... God was waiting to judge them
 2. How would they know what they were doing was evil?
 3. Don't know... but we see elsewhere that God did send people to warn these types of nations – Jonah.
 4. This may all seem cruel and unfair, but we should all stop for a moment and recognize that it does show something important...

5. God is slow to judge

6. B/c of what we do know about God, it's a very safe assumption he did the same with these cultures (proof in a bit) and they chose not to listen.
 7. And so God used the nation of Israel to judge these cultures.
- I. So the mission God gave the Israelites wasn't just to occupy the land, but to cleanse it...
1. They were to stay completely separate from the other cultures, not to marry into them, not participate in what they did.
- J. This new nation was fragile... they had just come out of 100's of years immersed in the religion of Egypt... so God took extreme measures to ensure that his nation, created to save humanity, would survive.

IV. GOD

- A. So as the Israelites prepare to enter the Promise Land, Joshua sends spies to investigate the first city they will encounter... Jericho.
1. They go to Jericho and find a place to stay inside the city at the house of a prostitute named Rahab.
 2. The king found out the spies were there and demanded that Rahab send them out...
 3. She hid them on the roof and said, "Uh, They went that way."
- B. Why would Rahab risk her own life to save spies that had come to conquer her people?
1. **Joshua 2:8-11**.
 2. The Canaanites somehow had heard of God's promise to Abraham... they had been warned in some way.
 3. They understood why the Israelites were there

4. They had all heard of the miracles and the victories God had given them... and they were terrified.
 5. But Rahab chose to respond differently than the rest of her people...
 6. **God lets us choose how we will respond to him.**
 7. Rahab chose to accept that Israel's God was the One true God, that her people and culture had missed it, and instead of fighting she chose to surrender and ask for protection- **Joshua 2:12-13**.
 8. Spies agree and tell her to hang a scarlet cord from her window so when they attacked they would know it was her house.
 9. Anyone who was in her house would be safe.
- C. The spies escape and report back to Joshua. It was now time to attack.
1. God gave very strange orders for the attack on Jericho...
 2. For six days they were to march once around the city...
 3. On the 7th day they were to march 7 times and then blow their trumpets and shout... and then the walls would come down.
- D. Why? Not a normal form of warfare...
1. God was giving the people of Jericho another chance to surrender... 7 days and then one last long day...
 2. No doubt the story would have ended very differently if there had been 100's of scarlet cords hanging from the windows instead of just one.
 3. It's what the spies had promised... **Josh 2:19b**. There's no limit to how many people...
4. Unfortunately the people's fear of God's judgment (decided to defend and fight) kept them from enjoying the peace of God's love.
 5. **Our fear of God's judgment often keeps us from enjoying the peace of God's love.**
- E. On the 7th day the army marches around 7 times, blows their horns, shouts and the walls come down...
1. And chaos ensues.
 2. They killed every person in the city, every sheep, donkey, and cow.
 3. Everything was destroyed... except for Rahab, her family, and their belongings...
- F. **Josh. 6:24-25**
1. Look at that last line again...
 2. A Canaanite prostitute, one of the least "deserving" of an "undeserving" people... b/c of a single act of trust, becomes a fully accepted member of God's new nation...
 3. She made the choice to not resist God's plans but to accept his gracious offer of mercy and forgiveness.
 4. But it gets even better...
- G. The 1st chapter in the account of Matthew shows that Rahab married an Israelite named Salmon...
1. They had a son named Boaz... who married a widow named Ruth...
 2. They had a son named Jesse... who's youngest son was named David. Who became the greatest king of Israel.
 3. And out of David's descendents came the promised savior of the world... Jesus.

4. Because of her choice to trust God... her entire identity and legacy changed, she was no longer Rahab the prostitute, she was Rahab the Mother of Kings.
5. She goes down in history as a huge part of God's plan to rescue all of humanity. Isn't that simply incredible?

V. YOU

- A. What had Rahab done to receive all of this?
 1. "Well she had to clean up her act, sacrifice a few animals, and say a few 100 prayers"... nope.
 2. One single act of trust.
- B. Interestingly... there was nothing in the spies' promise to Rahab about changing her lifestyle!
 1. Her behavior was not a barrier... was not even mentioned.
 2. Her past did not disqualify her from receiving God's love.
- C. This is really important, so if you zoned out for a minute It's the same with you... all of us as Rahab...
 1. **Your past does not disqualify you from receiving God's love.**
 2. The only prerequisite there is... is what Rahab did... She acknowledged that God was God and that He was good and chose to trust him.
- D. And b/c of her choice, her entire life, identity and legacy were changed forever by God.
- E. It's the same with us. Imagine this phone has recorded everything you've ever chosen to do with your life...
 1. It's how people see you, how you see you, it's keeping you separated from God.
 2. You can try to turn your life around, or turn over a new leaf... but it's still there.
 3. Nothing you can do can change that it's there. No good things you add to the video will change what came before

it. There's no way to undo or fix the wrongs that you've done, or to erase them.

4. That's why God promised Adam, Abraham, Israel to send someone to remove it... to take the judgment for it... Jesus.
 5. He died to clear your story and give you a new one
 6. Now there is no more judgment or fear... b/c one single act of trust takes away your past and gives you a new identity...
 7. **2 Cor 5:17, Rom 8:1, 1 John 4:18. (On screen at once)**
- F. To God, the change is immediate... like someone being adopted... the judge signs the paper and you are now a full member of your new family.
 1. But it might not always FEEL immediate....
 2. Did Rahab feel it change over night? Probably not.
 3. Though in God's eyes she was immediately and forever part of His chosen family... it probably took her time to see herself the way he did.
 4. It was probably a process... memories needed to slowly change from shame to thankfulness... "Thank you God for rescuing me out of that."
 5. **Seeing ourselves as God sees us is an ongoing process.**
 - G. If you are ready to accept this new free life God offers you or If you are struggling with accepting God's view of you... of seeing yourself as God sees you... here's a prayer you can say...
 1. *Heavenly Father, I believe that your love is more powerful than my past, present, or future. I believe that Jesus died to take the judgment and penalty my sin earned me. I believe that you are offering me a new identity... to adopt me into your family forever. Today I declare that what you*

*say about me is true. I'm loved, forgiven, and accepted.
Teach me to love others like you love me.*

2. First time/New Time- Cards

VI. WE

- A. God is both loving and just.
- B. He loves you but hates sin.
- C. He destroyed the effects and power of sin without destroying you by dying to take your punishment and rising again to offer you new life.
- D. You can choose to resist and fear him or you can choose to trust him and live in his love.
- E. **God is slow to judge and quick to rescue and restore.**

I don't know which of these to pick for you... your call on Monday I guess.

God is slow to judge and quick to rescue and restore.

Your past does not disqualify you from receiving God's love.