

1. What had Philip failed to grasp?
2. What did Jesus mean by his being in the Father and the Father being in him?

Consider

When Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, he appeared to be asking for an appearance of God similar to God's appearance to Moses at the burning bush and later on Mount Sinai. By making that request, Philip revealed that he failed to grasp who Jesus was. Philip had God in the flesh standing before him and didn't know it. Philip was like a child standing before the Pacific Ocean and asking to be taken to a swimming pool. The child has the world's largest and most magnificent swimming pool before him, but doesn't recognize it. Philip didn't recognize that Jesus was the most complete revelation of the Father possible. Jesus went on to explain that the Father was in him and he was in the Father. In other words in his being, Jesus possessed the same essence that God the Father had. Jesus was not a reflection of God's glory like the moon reflects the sun, but Jesus in his being possessed the same radiance of deity that the Father does (Hebrews 1:3). So when Philip and the rest of the disciples looked at Jesus, they saw the clearest revelation of the Father possible.

Saturday, February 20, 2010

Daily theme: Jesus rules and maintains the universe.

Questions

Read Colossians 1:15-17

1. What does Paul mean by Jesus being the firstborn of all creation?
2. What does it mean that in Jesus all things hold together?

Consider

On the surface it seems like verse 15 and 16 conflict with one another. In verse 15 Paul states that Jesus is the firstborn of all creation, then in 16 he affirms that all of creation came into existence through Jesus. If Jesus were a part of creation, then all of creation couldn't exist through him. Our problem is that we tend to think of the term "firstborn" in only in the temporal sense. In time the first born is the one who is born before all of his siblings. However this is not Paul's point here. He is not referring to birth order but pre-eminence. In the ancient world the first born was the designated heir to rule the family. He had a pre-eminent position over all of his siblings. However there were times when a man's firstborn was not given the pre-eminence of the first-born. Jacob was pre-eminent over Esau. Although he was the second youngest, Joseph was chosen by Jacob to be pre-eminent in Israel. Paul's point is not that Jesus was created by God before everything else, but that Jesus has the pre-eminence (v. 15). Because of his pre-eminence, Jesus could be the source for the entire created order (v. 16). In addition Jesus' role did not end with creation, but continues to this day. Jesus sustains the entire created order. Without Jesus' power the universe as we know it would cease to exist.

Stop Praying.

Psalm 19:1-6

Sermon Series: Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a relentless God
Devotional Notes February 15-20, 2010

Monday, February 15, 2010

Daily theme: God reveals himself through what he created.

Questions

Read Psalm 19:1-6

1. What type of information does God reveal through creation?
2. In what ways do the heavens declare God's glory?

Consider

Sometimes our drive to be efficient and effective can hinder our relationship with God. While we are so committed to get as much done as possible during any given day, we can look past all that God is doing and has revealed about himself each day. David observed that the heavens declare the glory of God. It is beyond our comprehension the vast expanse of the universe, but we can pause and reflect on how big our planet is. If you've ever taken a cross-country trip you are made aware of how big our planet is. For example if you begin your trip heading east out of San Francisco on I-80, for the first several hours you will cross the massive Central Valley, just west of Sacramento you will begin the steep climb of the Nevada Sierras. You will have traveled half a day and still have not left the State of California. Descending the eastern slope of the Nevada Sierras you will begin your trek through Nevada, an even longer journey than through California. Most of your trip will pass by small towns and barren land. The rest of your first day will be spent driving through Nevada. If you push on you will descend onto the Salt Flats of western Utah another 100 miles of land even more barren than Nevada. Finally you will approach the green of Salt Lake City and begin yet another climb on the Western Slope of the Rocky Mountains. Through Wyoming you will travel continually at an altitude of over a mile and eventually pass the Continental Divide and your second day of driving will come to close. On your third day of travel you will descend and leave Wyoming and enter the prairies of Nebraska, as you travel along side the North Platte River, smashing innumerable mosquitoes and flies on your windshield and passing endless corn fields. If you make good time you will cross over the Missouri River at Omaha, Nebraska and enter into Iowa at Council Bluffs. Pushing further you will pass more corn fields and observe the grain silos of Des Moines. Sometime on the morning of your fourth day of driving you will observe the terrain change from prairie to rolling hills that will signal your approach to the Mississippi River and the Quad Cities of Iowa and Illinois. After all that travel you are only approximately two-thirds across the United States. You will have passed some of the most desolate terrain along with the most fertile land on the planet. But it is still only one small part of our planet, and does not even come close to the magnitude of the heavens that reveal God's glory day after day. The heavens reveal God's immensity and creativity, since the heavens do not contain God; he dwells outside of them. Take some time today, slow down, turn off all your

electronic gadgets and reflect on all that God has created and what it teaches you about him. If you have to drive somewhere take a different, slower route so that you can enjoy more of what God has created. You will not be traveling through the heavens, but you will have an opportunity to see God's workmanship. As you pass through your day consider the days of your life and how not two of them are ever the same. With each new day God creatively gifts you with new experiences.

Tuesday, February 16, 2010

Daily theme: Creation gives us specific information about God's character.

Questions

Read Romans 1:20

1. How does creation reveal God's eternal power and divine nature?
2. What did Paul mean by writing that men are without excuse?

Consider

Children ask us simple yet profound questions like why does 2 plus 2 always equal 4? Why can't it equal 3 or 5 sometimes? Why do things always fall down and not sometimes fall up? We can explain these truths a mathematical or scientific explanation, but what do those facts reveal to us about God's nature. Why do we see order in our world and not random chaos? The creation reveals that God is rational and orderly. Or consider why when a disaster takes place as in Haiti recently that countries from all over the world reach out and help. Why would people who are busy, living in a competitive world, take the time to assist people that they don't even know? In this response we see the compassionate character of God. God consistently reaches out to man who is in need. Paul's point in writing that men are without excuse is that we have no way to explain what we observe in creation without God. We can't explain its existence, its orderliness. We can't account for the moral nature of man without God's perfect moral nature. Why do we call Adolph Hitler evil and Martin Luther King Jr. good? Why not the other way around? Where does our concept of goodness come from? Paul's point is that creation and our moral nature so clearly point to God that men are without excuse. Men will not be able to stand before God and claim that they didn't have enough knowledge of God to believe. They will have to admit that they saw God's work and chose to ignore him. They will be forced to confess that they were guilty of what the Psalmist wrote; they were guilty of playing the fool by denying the existence of God (Psalm 14:1)

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Daily theme: While men may be forgotten, God will never be.

Questions

Read Psalm 102:12, 25-27

1. Even though so many men ignore God, why is he always remembered?
2. Why would the Psalmist contrast God's eternity with creation's passing away?

Consider

It is sobering to think that everyone who is famous today will be forgotten in a few

years. Not many of us remember who James Buchanan was. Was he a famous actor, author, maybe a hall of fame football or baseball player? Perhaps he was a famous general. None of the above. He was the 15th president of the United States. Prior to his election to the presidency in 1856 he had been an extremely successful politician, having held high positions during previous administrations. It was thought he might have a great presidency and hold the divided nation together. That was not to be. Now historians look back and consider him one of the worst presidents ever. Although he was the president, most of us have forgotten who he was. Even famous and powerful men are forgotten but God is not. This was the Psalmist's point. Even though men are routinely forgotten, isn't it interesting that some men have tried to show how God was obsolete, so that belief in him would become irrelevant and meaningless? Their hope was that God would be forgotten and that they would be remembered. The opposite consistently occurs. Even with such opposition to God, he is not forgotten. Those from each generation commit to worshiping him and honoring him with their life.

Thursday, February 18, 2010

Daily theme: God's character prompts worship.

Questions

Read Revelation 4:1-11

1. What did John observe in the throne room of heaven?
2. What significance is meant by the four living beings having a face of a lion, calf, man and eagle?

Consider

It is interesting that John spent very little time describing God and much more time describing the throne room. I wonder if this was because God's appearance was so awesome that John did not have the vocabulary to describe him. However there were people and things he could describe, the throne, the rainbow, the crystal sea, the elders and the four living creatures. In the ancient world animals were often used to describe the nature of a ruler's kingdom. Solomon had lions carved into his throne. Around God's throne were these four creatures each with a different face. The first creature had the face of a lion. In the ancient world the lion symbolized authority and dominion, the legitimate right to rule. The second creature had the face of a calf or young bull. Bulls symbolized strength and endurance. The third face was that of a man, symbolizing God's wisdom and intelligence. The fourth creature had the face of an eagle illustrating the protective care of God. In the throne room we see all kinds of imagery. Each of these creatures reveal another aspect of God's reign and character. God the Father has the legitimate right and authority to rule all of creation. His power endures throughout eternity. His wisdom is recognized by his followers and one day will be recognized by all men. Throughout Scripture we are reminded of the protective care he gives to his people. The elders' and creatures' response to God reveal his holiness and worthiness to be worshiped.

Friday, February 19, 2010

Daily theme: Jesus is the ultimate representation of the Father.

Questions

Read John 14:7-10