

Different Kind of God | 1 Peter 1:13-16

Sermon-based Bible study | August 6, 2017

Core Teaching Point: Our God is different from anyone or anything that is a contender for our devotion.

1 Peter 1:13-16

Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Commentary:

In this passage, the biblical term "holy" is used to describe God and Christian believers. This word can carry a negative connotation today, however. A good way to understand the point that is being made is to substitute the word "different."

There are plenty of contenders, but God is different from them all in important ways. And our calling to be "holy" or "different" from the rest of the world is grounded in the fact that our God is different.

Questions:

1. Have you ever tried to do something different from your circle of friends or your co-workers?
2. How hard was it to stand out? Why?

Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

Commentary:

Genesis 1 is mostly about establishing how different the God of the Bible is from other gods of the cultures in the Ancient Near East (ANE), what we now refer to as the "Middle East." Early creation stories revealed a lot about the character of the gods of those cultures. Genesis 1 has the goal of revealing important differences about the character of God.

Here are 3 big differences:

1. God is Almighty, not just mighty.
2. He is a God of creativity and purpose, not chaotic, even violent happenstance.
3. God is intensely loving of His creation, instead of having a "meh, whatever" indifference to what happens in creation.

Questions:

1. What powerful forces influence you in your daily living? Economic challenges? Moral temptations? Ethical dilemmas?
2. How can trusting God's power help you deal with those challenges?
3. When and/or where do you experience chaos in your life?
4. How can knowing that God is on your side as a God of creative purpose help you deal with that chaotic situation/s?
5. Finally, in the midst of a "whatever" world, what difference does it make to have a God who is intensely loving toward His creation (including us!)?

Psalm 25:4-5

Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Prayer:

Almighty God, thank you for having a purpose for this world and for me. Thank you for intensely loving me. Help me to recognize how you are different from "counterfeit gods" of the world around me. Lead me to walk with you. In Jesus' name, Amen.