

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*Unlocking the language of our faith*,” this sermon explains a term often used in church but that can be confusing to people unfamiliar with Christianity—Holy. God is holy, and He calls us to be holy. What does that mean, and how do we explain it to others?

Introduction: In the vision Isaiah saw of God’s throne room, he heard the angel cry, “Holy, holy, holy” (Isaiah 6:3). God, he proclaimed, is holy. Most humans define holiness as morality. Having good character that prevents God or any other holy one from engaging in sin *is* a sub-set of holiness. That, though, does not go far enough as a definition.

“Different, different, different.” *Totally* different. That’s what the angels, then and now, want the universe to know. God is not the same stuff as His creation. Though He made us like Him in some respects (Gen. 1:26), and though He calls us to rise to His level (1 Pet. 1:16) still, there will always be a gulf between who God is and who we are (Isaiah 55:8-11). God is unique. There is no other like Him.

1. God is unique in His creative ability. (v. 26, 28)

Many are creative. They take what is in their environment and envision how they can combine, reshape, and repurpose what is already present. What I have seen people do with matches, dominoes, cellophane, and flowers amazes me! I envy their skill. What they do evidences that God’s image resides within them.

You see, only God creates. While creative people take what God has already done and make it “new,” only He can take nothing and bring something into existence. Doing so takes great power—the power that only God possesses. It also takes great wisdom and ingenuity. We function under the universe’s laws. God established them. There is no one like our God.

2. God is unique in His concern for His creation. (v. 27)

Behold the sheer vastness of the nighttime sky. Count the stars if you can. And then humbly acknowledge the greatness of God. He is great, not only because His power is enough to create these things, but also because He is concerned enough to name (and remember the names) of each one even though they are inanimate objects with which He can have no relationship.

Isaiah spoke of the large, faraway, majestic part of God's creation. Jesus took a different approach and mentioned the sparrows and wildflowers (Matt. 6:26, 28). They are small, close at hand, and seemingly insignificant. God's care for both extremes of His creation prove His concern for the whole. He is not an absent Father who brings creations into the world and then leaves them to their own fate. No, He sustains His creation. He does it for the stars; He does it for His children.

3. God is unique in His constant strength. (v. 28)

You would think that with what God did in Creation, He would get tired. You would expect His energy to drain away. Not so. He has an inexhaustible supply. When the Bible says that God rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2-3), it means that God reflected on and appreciated His finished work, not that He needed regeneration or refreshment.

We, on the other hand, get tired. Jesus, when He became a human, got tired (John 4:6). It is part of the human condition. That's part of the reason that God instituted the seventh day rest because He, our Creator, knew how much we needed to slow down (Ex. 20:9-11; Ps. 103:14). Even with that weekly rest, we need something more. Thankfully, God provides what we need most.

4. God is unique in His charitable spirit. (v. 29-31)

God is powerful. What God has, He gives. Even those humans who have both a rich supply of resources and a generous heart can grow tired of constant requests for help. Those who get power are often overly protective of it. Their power puts them in a unique position that they want to keep.

Saul, the first king of Israel, was a good king until he got powerful. He then feared losing that power to David or anyone else he felt was a threat to it.

No one threatens God. And none can exhaust His deep well of sustenance. As many times as we ask, and no matter how much we withdraw, God is still ready the next time to pour into our lives with His love and care. No one is like our God. Our God is good.

Conclusion: God birthed His creation, but He is very different from it. The primary reason that holiness is normally connected with morality is that God's complete separation from sin is the most noticeable and the most important way that He is different from His creation. It is also the number one consideration when He calls us, His children, to be different from the world.

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