

life groups' sermon guide

indescribable greatness



LIFE GROUPS

doing life together

Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for the life application of the Core 4 elements of worship, grow, serve, and share.

“To whom can you compare God? What image can you find to resemble him?... ‘To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?’ asks the Holy One.”

– Isaiah 40:18, 25

Life is hard. Sometimes life throws us curve balls, and it’s difficult to manage. Or worse, tragedy strikes in one form or another. What do you do? How do you manage?

Just a couple of weeks ago, massive tornadoes hit the southern part of Indiana, as well as, the surrounding states. One small town, Henryville, Indiana, (pop. 1905) was literally wiped off the map. In the midst of the storms, stories emerged of triumph and tragedy. Heroes rose to the occasion, including a young mother, Stephanie Decker, from nearby Marysville who used her body to shield her two young children. Though she lost parts of both legs, she survived and her children were virtually unscathed.

But, not everyone survived, and those communities in that part of our state now have to come to grips with the reality of family and friends who have been lost, and houses and communities that have been reduced to rubble.

Where is God in the midst of such tragedy? Where is He when life gets hard? Is He even there at all? These questions haunt the many people who do not know God. And for those of who do, they still create a certain wrestling inside our minds and hearts.

Q:: One of the major questions that skeptics of Christianity ask is, “If God is so loving and good, then why does He allow bad things to happen to good people?” What are the underlying assumptions they are making about God through this objection?

Q:: How might we respond to that objection?

Discussion:

In Mark 4:35-41 we find Jesus and his disciples making their way across the Lake of Galilee. Suddenly, a fierce storm—much like the tornadoes of this past week—comes up, and the disciples are afraid. They wake Jesus up and plead for His help. He commands the wind and the waves to cease, and they become calm instantly.

Q:: Imagine you're the disciples and the storm comes up. Have you ever been in a storm like that? What did you feel? Why?

Q:: What was the reaction of the disciples to miracle of Jesus calming the storm?

One of the things that storms and other natural disasters cause us to realize is that we humans are insignificant by comparison. If you've ever watched video footage of a tornado, a tsunami, an avalanche, or an earthquake, one comes to realize how vulnerable we really are.

And yet, when life is good, we forget that reality. It is pushed far from our minds, and we begin to believe that there are no limits to our capabilities. Read the following passage from Isaiah 40:18-25:

To whom can you compare God? What image can you find to resemble him? Can he be compared to an idol formed in a mold overlaid with gold, and decorated with silver chains? Or if people are too poor for that, they might at least choose wood that won't decay and a skilled craftsman to carve an image that won't fall down!

Haven't you heard? Don't you understand? Are you deaf to the words of God—the words he gave before the world began? Are you so ignorant? God sits above the circle of the earth. The people below seem like grasshoppers to him! He spreads out the heavens like a curtain and makes his tent from them. He judges the great people of the world and brings them all to nothing. They hardly get started, barely taking root, when he blows on them and they wither. The wind carries them off like chaff.

"To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One.

Q:: How might we summarize the essence of what Isaiah is saying in this passage?

Q:: What is the point that Isaiah is making by comparing God to the idols made by human hands?

Trusting God for an Unseen Future

Consider the beginning of mankind, as Adam and Eve were created and placed in the Garden of Eden. Life was very good, because God had provided everything they needed. They had the run of the place and could do virtually anything they wanted, except for one thing. God specifically told them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17).

Ironically, when Satan came to tempt Eve, he went straight for the forbidden fruit. And he began to undermine the greatness and authority of God.

Q:: What was the first thing Satan asked Eve?

Q:: Why was this question significant? What was Satan trying to do?

Through this exchange between Eve and Satan, the seeds were planted for the tension that continues to take root in our lives to this day. It is the tension between God and mankind—who's in charge?

Q:: Where do we see examples of human beings challenging the power and authority of God?

Q:: How can we point people to a better understanding of the true nature of God, as well as, our proper place in the world?

Application

Not only does God's greatness help us recognize His power and authority in our lives, but it also provides a safe haven in the midst of trouble. God can see the big picture and we can't. We struggle with the unseen over the horizon or around the corner. But, Romans 8:28 promises us, "God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

Q:: What does this promise mean?

Q:: How do we reconcile this promise with the reality of difficulties we might face in life?

Q:: How does God use the hardships in our life to help us grow in our faith?

Q:: How might our perspective change if we—like the atheist skeptics in our world—do not believe in God or an afterlife? Namely, what changes if this life is all there is? How do we approach tragedy?

Q:: If we (or other people) struggle to believe in God's greatness and goodness, where else do we turn to help solve the problems we might face in life?

Ultimately, this all comes down to a trust issue. Do I have enough faith to trust that God is willing and able to protect me, to sustain me, and to comfort me during the difficulties that life may bring? If not, where else do I look?

Question for Reflection: Are there any areas of your life that are unable (or unwilling) to trust to God's greatness and authority? As you identify those areas, confess your lack of trust in God, and ask for His help to trust Him for the unseen future. Are you willing to do what it takes work through that process? Who can you do today (or this week) to begin that process?