
Doug Hood's Heart and Soul ... *A Weekly Meditation*

August 28, 2016

Who Is God?

READ: Matthew 6:33 (Common English Bible)

"Instead, desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

MEDITATE:

I don't find many sermons today on the sovereignty of God, that five dollar word that simply asks, "Who is God?" It is an important question. As any good question will do, the question gives birth to a host of other questions: Who owns the earth? Who rules our hearts? To whom does our first allegiance belong? These are the urgent questions for our day. They are the questions that frame the political, economic and ethical conversations we are drawn into on a regular basis. I am, therefore, grateful that the other day I discovered a gem among my library, a sermon by J. Wallace Hamilton: "Who Goes There?"ⁱ Though it was preached sometime in the 1950's, it retains a crisp and clear presentation of that great question and solicits our faithful response.

Wallace offers a persuasive argument that there is present today a practical atheism in our nation, a denial of placing God and God's purposes first in our lives. Some will announce a conviction, "nation first," while other voices will clamor, "team first" or "family first." What about God? The first step for addressing the unsettledness of our nation, suggests Wallace, is spiritual; returning God to the center of our lives. The way we think and the values that shape our lives are rooted and nourished by the gods to which we give our lives. And nothing will end well for us, or as a nation, until we get the center right. Every loyalty will disappoint us until we give our highest loyalty to God.

What this means in terms of practical action reaches into every area of our lives. There must be a resolve against the segmentation of our lives; the separation of business, family and the religious dimension. Some years ago, a politician spoke rather harshly about some political comments made by the Pope, arguing that he should leave politics to the politicians. If the Pope is representative of God's claims and purposes in the world, there is no area that is off-limits, especially politics. With God at the center, our responsibility is to answer every question as it arises on the basis of God's sovereignty; on the basis of what God would have us do.

Among the great sins is the notion that the world is ours; that we are free to do with the world what we will. That notion simply doesn't square with scripture. The world isn't ours to serve our needs and do with as we please. That is the great lie that stands in the way of an authentic embrace of the sovereignty of God. Who owns the earth? That answer all depends upon the god that is at the center. The question of God's sovereignty eventually comes home to each of us. To place God at the center may require a new mind and a new birth. But for those who return God to the center, it is a discovery of a kingdom of which there will be no end.

ⁱ J. Wallace Hamilton, "The Sovereignty of God," **Who Goes There: What and Where Is God?** (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, MCMLVIII), p. 35-47.

