

Contemplative Learning Circle
October 10, 2021

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CHRISTINA:

Welcome. We are glad you joined us today.

For those who may not know me, I am Christina Roberts from Foundry414 and I am co-facilitating with Ken Lund from Arbor Covenant.

During the course of our time together if any questions arise, please feel free to use the chat area and one of us will monitor that and reply to you.

As we begin today, I'd like to offer the simple act of lighting a candle. I have come to appreciate this as we are collectively spending more time online these days. Having a live flame reminds me of the Light of God to illuminate our lives and that somehow the Holy Spirit transcends our computer screens.

LIGHT CANDLE

Ken:

Merton Prayer

*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following Your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.*

*But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.*

*And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore I will trust You always
though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for You are ever with me, and
You will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.*

– Thomas Merton, Thoughts in Solitude, page 79.

CHRISTINA:

Why are we gathered today

I talk to lots of people in a given week both as a pastor and as a spiritual director. Sometimes I notice that people from different spaces are talking about similar topics and I tend to pay attention when that happens.

This summer we had 2 different people email foundry who found us on the web. They each asked what we believe about hell. This topic was top of mind because about a week before the first email one of the kids at church was asking about this, so I was processing it with Margaret who leads our kids ministry.

I thought it was interesting that I was having the same type of conversation in a matter of a few weeks.

I was reminded of a pastor friend of mine talking about a popular sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" written by the American theologian Jonathan Edwards, in 1741.

I had never heard of the sermon or read it, but I began to realize that this influential sermon portraying an angry God ready to send people to an eternal fire has a far reaching influence.. All the way from 1741 to people living now in the 21 century.

I think all of us have acquired, over the years, false images of God. Some we may have been directly taught. Others we may have picked up along the way in a more subtle form. For those who were with us 2 weeks ago, Ken read a story offering a dramatic example of a God image that is all too close to the standard theology that many of us grew up with.

Our hope today is to bring increased awareness of some of the false images influencing us. Not to bring shame or make us feel embarrassed or that "we should have known better". But to hopefully bring awareness that can lead us away from these false images and into the hands of a Loving God.

Ken:

To guide our conversation, we will refer to an article from Relevant Magazine titled, [*Five Signs You May Have A Wrong View of God.*](#)

The "Wrong View" terminology is the author's-- probably a bit more judgmental than what we would have chosen.

Christina and I will take turns reading the points and then we will open it up for some reflection and dialogue with the group.

KEN:

Motivated by shame instead of love

CHRISTINA

Scared of being "outside" of God's will instead of trusting that God is guiding you

KEN

Feel a need to defend the Gospel instead of reveal the Gospel

CHRISTINA

Equating hardship with holiness

KEN:

Trying harder instead of being transformed

CHRISTINA:

As we offer this slide with the 5 signs you may have a wrong view of God, we would like to take some time to name what stands out to you? Maybe there is a particular one you resonate with. Maybe more than one.

We invite you to utilize the chat area if you would like to name what number(s) strike a chord.

For those who feel comfortable sharing with the group, we invite you to raise your hand and you can unmute yourself to share some of your thoughts and stirrings with the group.

SHARING TIME

KEN:

As we bring our time together to a close, we'd like to share a song from Common Hymnal Song: *God is Not Abusive*

Ken explain lectio divina concept with the song

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tV0f9wCyqeo&list=RDtV0f9wCyqeo&start_radio=1

Closing

Thanks for joining us. Webpage to revisit the information.