
Sermon Notes

January 26, 2020

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

All By Myself

Exodus 15:11, Isaiah 40:18,25, Romans 11:34-35

In a Class By Itself

- ❖ Phrase used to describe those who are outstanding in their field, innovators and self-starters
- ❖ In reality, there is only One who deserves this moniker
 - no one, nothing compares with God
 - no one can add to or take anything away from God
- ❖ Our incomparable, one of a kind, in a class by Himself God wants us to know Him

Moses, Isaiah, Paul

- ❖ Moses' song in Exodus 15 explodes with praise
 - climax in v. 11: *Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?*
 - God rescues! God redeems! God delivers!
- ❖ Isaiah proclaims the might and majesty of God right alongside the Lord's mercy and tenderness
 - "He's got the whole world in His hands"

- the nations of the earth are like a drop in a bucket or a particle of dust on a scale compared to God
- *To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?* (Isaiah 40:18, 25)
- yet, although nothing compares with God, God chooses to be intimately involved in looking out for, caring for, providing for His people (Isaiah 40:29-31)
- ❖ Paul praises the uniqueness of God with one of the most magnificent doxologies in the entire NT (Romans 11:34-36)
 - God is NOT like us!
 - God's wisdom, God's ways, God's aims, God's values are so vastly different from our own

The Issue of Idolatry

- ❖ Paul's description of idolatry in the Greco-Roman world of his day (Romans 1:22-23, 25)
 - although this is one form of idolatry, the issue of idolatry is far deeper and much more insidious than these more blatant forms
 - idolatry is such a big issue that it is #2 on the list of God's 10 commandments! (Exodus 20:4-5)
- ❖ Idolatry consists not only of worshiping false gods but of worshiping the true God in false ways
 - the golden calf (Exodus 32:4)
 - Aaron sets God's people up to worship the true God in a false way

Personal Reflection

- ❖ God wants to guard us against our natural tendency to whittle God down to our size
 - no image crafted by human hands can ever represent the totality of who God is
 - illustrations: Mt. Rushmore, Beethoven's 5th Symphony
 - no earthly form or symbol can ever capture and communicate who God is
 - example: the cross testifies to Jesus' humility, weakness, agony, and sacrifice, but it does not convey the glory of Jesus' victory over death and the grave or the fact that Jesus now reigns in majesty and glory
- ❖ Images may cause us to think of certain truths about God, but no single image can ever communicate the fulness of God's glory
- ❖ More than the making of physical images, the contemporary cause for concern with idolatry surrounds forming mental images about God
 - "The way **I** like to think about God is..."
 - people pick and choose the parts of God they like playing one attribute of God off against another
 - people look at God's description of Himself in Scripture like a menu from which they get to choose
- ❖ "We were made in God's image, but we must not think of God as existing in ours. To think of God in such terms is to be ignorant of Him, not to know Him." (J. I. Packer)
- ❖ The 2nd commandment is a love gift from God that prevents us from running amuck when it comes to knowing God!

1. What led people like Moses, Isaiah, and Paul to develop such a "big picture" of God? What can you do to help yourself keep developing a "big vision" of a "big God"?
2. Are there any ways you are aware of in which you are prone to "pare God down to size" in order to reduce Him to a "more manageable" size? Why does God want to protect you from the danger of doing this?
3. Do you ever find yourself saying anything similar to the sentence: "The way I like to think about God is _____."? What is the danger of holding onto any such thinking? Can you think of any way to complete that sentence that would not lead you down the wrong path?