

Google God – part one
“The Sovereignty of God”
Pastor Dale Campfield – Eastgate Community Church
October 11th, 2009

Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration. To grow...which is expressed in our Connection Groups. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Sermon Series Title: Google God
“There are Some Questions in Life that Only God can Answer”

Have you ever surfed the internet for an answer to your questions? Most all of us have. What about those questions that we have that only God can answer; those really tough questions in life that if man were to answer them we may or may not get the real truth? During this series, we're going to Google God by looking at those tough questions in life and find out what God has to say about them!

The Sovereignty of God

When we try to find answers we usually look in many different directions.

- In the past, we use to use...

The Library Encyclopedia Britannica Reference Books People

- Now... we use different web sites on the internet...

Bing.com, Yahoo.com, HotBot.com, DogPile.com, MapQuest.com,
MetaCrawler.com, YouTube.com, WebCrawler.com, Lycos.com,
YellowPages.com, AskJeeves.com, Facebook.com, Twitter.com

- On the telephone...

Cha Cha; where you can text in a question and get back an answer within a few seconds. There are people on the other end just waiting for your questions.

KGB... 542.542 texting on your phone for your answers.

- I-pod: I Play On Dis

- But... the most popular of them all is, “Google”.

Today, as we begin this new series called “Google God.” We’re going to look at the tough questions of life, presenting them to God and seeing what He has to say about them. When we use Google, we look for answers or direction from man. It is man that has put all of the information that is in the internet in the internet; therefore the information could be false. There is no sure way of knowing that it is true or not in many cases. However, when we Google God, when we go to him for our direction, we will ALWAYS get the Truth and the True direction of life that will be the most beneficial for us in the quest of our lives.

So... what are a few of the questions that you’ve presented to us as a staff? A few weeks ago we gave you the opportunity ask the tough questions of God. Here is an example of a few of those...

QUESTIONS WE RECEIVED FROM EASTGATE CONGREGATION...

Age 48 “Why do children suffer? They are innocent, yet sometimes horrible, unspeakable crimes are committed against them. Why do You let that happen? You could stop it.”

Age 60 “Why do children have to suffer so much through abuse or physical things like cancer at a very young age?”

Age 29 “As much as I love my 3 children, why did he allow my baby to die?”

Age 69 “Why are some people healed and others are not? Even though they are all open to receive healing and believe to be healed?”

Age 26 “Why do bad things happen to good people (Christians) and it seems like the bad/evil people have no problems.”

So where was God in all of this? Why does God allow rape and murder and cruelty to affect innocent children? We claim that God is Lord. We claim that nothing is above His control. We state firmly that God is love and is all-powerful. So why does the Lord stand by and allow such cruel suffering to exist?

Joseph probably had the same questions. He was the favorite son of his father but his many brothers were jealousy of him. One day they saw an opportunity to dispose of this brother, especially since Joseph had a dream that one day his brothers would be bowing down to him. A caravan was going through the land and so his brothers sold him into slavery. Imagine this poor boy; he is only about 17 to 19 years old and his whole life is caving in on him. Picture him on this caravan, young and naïve and scared to death. He is taken to Egypt where he becomes a high-ranking servant in Potiphar’s house. Just when everything is going well, Potiphar’s wife makes a move on Joseph but Joseph does the right thing and rejects her but he is the one that is blamed and thrown into prison. Imagine this young man with all the rejections of society. I am sure he is wondering where the Lord is in this picture. He is faithful, he is submissive, but he is suffering. Where is God? Finally, Joseph has his opportunity to rise again in the Egyptian world by interpreting Pharaoh’s dream. This door that the Lord opened led him to the position right below Pharaoh himself on the power scale.

Newscaster Paul Harvey tells a remarkable story of God’s providential care over thousands of allied prisoners during World War II, many of whom were Christians. One of America’s mighty bombers took off

from the island of Guam headed for Kokura, Japan, with a deadly cargo. Because clouds covered the target area, the sleek B-29 circled for nearly an hour until its fuel supply reached the danger point. The captain and his crew, frustrated because they were right over the primary target yet not able to fulfill their mission, finally decided they had better go for the secondary target. Changing course, they found that the sky was clear. The command was given, "Bombs away!" and the B-29 headed for its home base. Sometime later an officer received some startling information from military intelligence. Just one week before that bombing mission, the Japanese had transferred one of their largest concentrations of captured Americans to the city of Kokura. Upon reading this, the officer exclaimed, "Thank God for that protecting cloud! If the city hadn't been hidden from the bomber, it would have been destroyed and thousands of American boys would have died." God's ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work. (John Nelson Darby/sermonillustrations.com)

As we go throughout this series, we'll present a panel of Bible Experts before you to look at the answers. As well, we'll look at the testimony of many people who have lived these questions and come through the other side. But today, I want to share with you concerning the Sovereignty of God. What is it?

QUESTION: What is the sovereignty of God?

- **The word "sovereign" is both a noun and verb. As a verb it means, "to rule," and as a noun it means "king" or "absolute ruler."**

Allow me to share with you a few definitions of the Sovereignty of God.

- **Definition #1:** "God is in control of everything."
- **Definition #2:** "God is in charge of the entire universe all the time."

The Westminster Confession puts it like this: "He ordains whatsoever comes to pass."

- **Definition #3:** "God's sovereignty means that He is absolutely free to do as He pleases and to demonstrate His absolute control over the actions of all His creatures."
- **Definition #4:** "God permits, for reasons known only to Himself, people to act contrary to His revealed will, but He never allows them to act against His sovereign will."

This is seen clearly in the following verses:

Proverbs 19:21

“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”

Lamentations 3:37

“Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it?”

James 4:15

“You ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.’”

Job 42:2

“I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.”

Psalms 115:3

“Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him.”

4 Practical Truths Related to God’s Sovereignty

Truth #1: The sovereignty of God is a very humbling doctrine.

Sovereignty reminds us that God is God and we are not. It’s an exalting doctrine because it gives us a big view of God. Many of us struggle because our view of God is too small.

Truth #2: The sovereignty of God is a very mysterious doctrine.

It’s also a mysterious doctrine because it brings us face to face with the problem of evil and free will. If God is sovereign, why is there evil in the universe? If humans have free will, how can God be in control? These questions have been debated for centuries and perhaps I’ll preach on them in the future. For our purposes this morning, suffice it to say that God is sovereign and you and I are fully responsible for all the choices we make.

Truth #3: The sovereignty of God is a very clarifying doctrine.

It’s a clarifying doctrine because it teaches that there is no such thing as luck, chance, fate or coincidence. You can have God or chance, but you can’t have both. It reminds me of the cowboy who applied for health insurance. The agent asked him if he had had any accidents during the previous year. The cowboy replied, “No. But I was bitten by a rattlesnake, and a horse kicked me in the ribs. That laid me up for awhile.” The agent said, “Weren’t those accidents?” “No,” replied the cowboy, “They did it on purpose.” He recognized that there is no such thing as an “accident.” How about you? Do you believe that some things catch God by surprise?

Truth #4: The sovereignty of God is a very empowering doctrine.

Finally, this is an empowering doctrine. Since God is in charge, no mere human can intimidate you. You can live your life with boldness and confidence, without fearing anyone or anything. Since God is sovereign, we can trust Him with our lives.

Now...

Here's the crux in dealing with the sovereignty of God...the bottom line.

In dealing with the sovereignty of God you must settle 3 issues...

To Settle = "Come to peace with it."

SETTLE THREE ISSUES

Issue #1: "Does God love me?"

Ask yourself, "Does God love me?" This is a question that you must settle in your mind. It's not an option. When you deal with the questions proposed to God and can't seem to find an answer, you must answer in your heart whether or not God really does love you.

The fact is, He does love you. His love for us is far more powerful than we could possibly comprehend; we've all heard the text about how God loved us so much He gave His only Son as a sacrifice to be killed for us. That's true love. But there are other examples of His love all around us. Truly, He doesn't have to love us, for we are nothing but sinners and unclean compared to Him; but yet He still loves us.

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

Romans 5:8

"But God shows and clearly proves His [own] love for us by the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) died for us."

He loves us. His Word tells us of His love. The past adventures we've had to go through tell us of His love. The trials and temptations He's brought us through tell us of His love. He loves us – settle it in your mind right now.

Issue #2: “Do I love God?”

Ask yourself, “Do I love God?” Ask yourself and settle it in your mind immediately. Do you really love God – of course you do. You may be angry at Him, which is okay; you may not understand Him; which is okay; but do you love Him? When our daughter died, I was nothing but angry at God. I couldn’t understand it then, and I don’t understand it now... why did she die?

Mark 12:30

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

We are even commanded to love Him so it’s not an option. But, do you love Him because you want to love Him? It’s one thing to be commanded to love someone, but do you love Him because you want to? That’s the place that we need to be in our lives, that we choose to love Him not only because we’re commanded to, but because we want to and nothing is going to stop me from loving God.

If you consider my bride Cathi; I’m going to love her no matter what anyone else wants. If someone tells me not to – it makes no difference; I’m going to love her. No one, nothing, no circumstances can keep me from loving her! I love her! Do you love God?

Psalms 22:3

“God inhabits the praises of His people.”

As you love on Him, He’ll fill you with the strength you need. Only God can truly satisfy in your life. Do you love Him?

Issue #3: “Do I trust Him?”

Proverbs 3:5

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, instead, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.”

Psalms 62:8

“Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.”

Ask yourself, “Do I trust God?” And if you do trust Him, how much? We all have people in our lives that we know we can trust whole heartedly, no matter what. Then, there are others that we know we can trust to a certain degree and that’s it. Most of the time it’s because of one of two reasons that we don’t trust them completely.

A – we don’t really know them that well.

B – they’ve let us down in the past, so we can’t trust them with our future.

So.... With God, how well do you know Him...

It All Comes down to this...

It all comes down to - how much do you trust God?...

...which comes down to - how much do you love God?...

...which comes down to - how much time am I spending with God?...

...which comes down to - does my passion for God's presence outweigh my passion for the world?

If you truly do love Him and know that He loves you, then you can trust Him with your...

- Finances
- Relationships
- Physical Battles'
- Past
- Present
- Future
- Attacks from the enemy, etc.

Conclusion:

Take Note...

Concerning God's love...

- **You're not always going to feel it.**
- **You're not always going to see it.**
- **You're not always going to hear it.**

Man may say to you, like Job's wife said to Job, "Why don't you just curse God and die?"

As Christians living within God's Sovereignty, He loves us, and will ALWAYS set us up for victory!

Remember, God is sovereign and we're not always going to understand what He does and what He allows to happen in our lives. But once we have settle these three issues in our minds and lives, this will give us the strength to keep moving forward, making the greatest IMPACT possible.

You watch... you wait... you'll see!