

Steele Memorial United Methodist Church
Is God Good? *A Trustworthy God*

March 22, 2020
Pastor Kevin Lantz

Psalm 13; Proverbs 3:1-8

Our *experience* with life and with tragedies and with success and pain and love cause us to form deeper opinions about who God is or what is His nature more than what the Bible teaches us.

Many of us have made God more understandable and more tolerable, like Rabbi Kushner – at the expense of making God dumber, weaker, and worse.

It's no wonder you're not in love with a God like this!

⁹ Do not forget the things I have done throughout history. For I am God – I alone! I am God, and there is no one else like Me. ¹⁰ Only I can tell you what is going to happen even before it happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish. ¹¹ ...I have said I would do it, and I will. Isaiah 46:9-11

Gabriel declared to Mary, "Nothing is impossible with God!" (Luke 1:37)

Jesus said, "All things are possible with God!" (Matthew 19:26)

On the one hand *we can believe* what the Bible says about God, while on the other hand subtly, secretly, subconsciously we wonder whether God is just doing the best He can.

Our deepest convictions about the nature of God come from out of our *experiences*.

If God can't prevent our suffering even if He wanted to, then why should we believe there is a hopeful future? Why should we believe in heaven?

A failure many believers make is
to dismiss God as weak, not powerful;
flawed, not competent;
kind, but not really good.

Proverbs 3:1-8

¹ My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart, ² for they will give you a long and satisfying life. ³ Never let loyalty and kindness get away from you! Wear them like a necklace; write them deep within your heart.

⁴ Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will gain a good reputation.

⁵ **Trust in the LORD with all your heart...do not depend on your own understanding.** ⁶ Seek His will in all you do, and He will direct your paths.

⁷ Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the LORD and turn your back on evil. ⁸ Then you will gain renewed health and vitality.

I was despondent, but I was also angry because of my helplessness. How I wished for strength and control enough in my fingers to do something, anything, to end my life. – Joni Eareckson

God cares most – not about making us comfortable – but about teaching us to hate our sins, grow up spiritually, and love Him. To do this, He *gives us salvation's benefits only gradually, sometimes painfully gradually*. In other words, He lets us continue to feel much of sin's sting while we're headed for heaven ...where at last, every sorrow we taste will one day prove to be the *best possible thing* that could have happened. – Joni Eareckson, 35 years later

So let's pay attention to what God is saying and doing in each of our lives at this time through a pandemic!

We will train ourselves to understand the comfort of His intimacy!

What if He can't get your attention without a pandemic? But within the hysteria of this global threat, you instead withdraw into yourself in fear?

There is no *reason* that satisfies your personal tragedy ...but there is a *relationship* that will – a relationship with a God who wants to love you.

God made you in order to love you! God made the best possible world – knowing this world would bear heartache and pain. But He has planned to redeem us in our fear and sorrow *through faith* in His grace and love!

It's hard to receive His love and trust Him to bring you through these uncertain days if you're blaming God and have turned away from Him.

Sermon support comes from Randy Alcorn's book, *If God Is Good*; Multnomah Books, 2009, see Section 4