



September Series: Big God

Message #1 – **Big God: He is Sufficient**

Getting the Nod

How big are your problems? How big is the crisis in our country? How dire is the spiritual condition in our nation? There is a remedy. Do you believe that? I believe that... not based on my own intelligence or wisdom or influence. There is a remedy! And the remedy is found in this question, "How big is your God?"

Quote by A. W. Tozer: The most important thing about us and our lives is what we think about God.

Quote by Charles Colson: "No culture (in history) has ever been greater than it's idea of God; because it is the cult of beliefs that gives rise to a culture."

It is still true today: The success or failure of a nation rises and falls on it's thoughts about God!

Illustration of the Milk Pitcher and the Boy: During the late 1800's an English evangelist named Henry Moorhouse made several trips to preach in America. On one of those occasions he was taking a walk through a poor section of town when he noticed a small boy coming out of a store with a pitcher of milk in his hands. Just then, he slipped and fell breaking the pitcher and spilling the milk all over the sidewalk. Moorhouse rushed to the child's side and found him unhurt but terrified. "My momma's gonna whip me!" he kept crying. So Moorhouse picked up the boy and carried him into the nearby store where the preacher purchased a new pitcher. Then washed it and then filled it with milk. With that done, he carried the boy and the pitcher home. Putting the youngster down on his front porch, Moorhouse handed him the pitcher and asked, "**Now that you have your milk, will your mama whip you now?**" A wide smile spread across the boy's tear stained face and replied, "No sir, cause this is a lot better pitcher than we had before." **You see, it wasn't the milk that saved the day... it was the thing that held the milk together!**

Transition: The remedy for your problems; the crisis in our country; the dire spiritual condition in our nation isn't found in the stuff of this life... **but is the One who holds it all together!!! He is a Big God!**

Connecting Us

If we think of God as like **an indulgent grandfather**, then our morals will tend to become primarily matters of convenience or fashion, won't they? If our dominant idea of God is that he is **an angry judge**, it will create in us a psychology of anxiety or maybe a religion of jihad. If we think of God as **a distant deity largely unconcerned with our life**, or as someone content with being our **celestial 911 service**, then this, too, will profoundly shape the way we move through life.

How we view God affects how we do our religion and politics, our parenting and working, and how we relate with others... whether consciously or unconsciously.

I want to be like Joshua and Caleb who were sent out by Moses to spy the promised land and believed in a big God even though the other 10 spies acted cowardly. Those 10 spies would eventually die in the desert... but the bold faith of Joshua and Caleb allowed them to see it!!!

Transition: What do you think about God? If Tozer was right, then your answer to that question is the most important thing about you. In the month of September, we will be looking at the ***the God who really is and how Big He is... and why He is the One we all should turn to now!! He is not just any old God... a faceless god who we keep around... not because we love and adore Him... but want Him around for the 911 moments when we call on Him.***

God will never answer the prayers of people who keep God in the minutia of our lives instead of high and lifted up for the priority of our lives.

God's Take on Himself

Scriptural Background: Turn in your Bibles to Acts 17... or watch the screens...

- The Apostle Paul met a similar mindset in the people of Athens long ago. The Athenians had erected shrines and spiritual symbols on almost every street corner.
- They'd made a business out of doing church for all kinds of gods.
- To make sure they'd covered all the bases, they'd even put up an altar with this inscription: "To an Unknown God."
- They were relentless in at least superficially attending to the needs of any possible deity. They tried to cover all the bases of their needs and potential crisis.
- But in Acts 17, Paul sought to plant in their minds... let's read it together...

NLT | Ac 17:24-28 ***“He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn’t live in man-made temples, 25 and human hands can’t serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. 26 From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. 27 “His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. 28 For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’***

Now get ready...The message of the Bible is that...

- God does not need anything from us. He does not need our service.
- He does not need our temples, our religious ceremonies, or our affirmations of his worth.
- He does not need our nation or political parties. He does not need our efforts to set the dress code, the times and places for meeting him, and otherwise organize reality on his behalf.
- He does not need us to place an obligation on Him to account for himself.

The Bible does not say, “In the beginning man created God in his own image!!! NLT | Ps 90:2 ***Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are God.***

Transition: Before the universe or anything existed God already was and always would be God. **God is self-existing, self-perpetuating, and self-satisfying.** The first and most important attribute of God necessary for us to grasp is that God is utterly sufficient in and of himself.

Our Response

Here is the Mystery of our Sufficient Big God:

1. **He chose to create us so that we could come to know Him.**

- The Bible teaches that God desires for you and me to live in relationship with him.
- **Jesus told us...** NKJV | Jn 3:16-17 **For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**
- **Paul reiterated it...** NLT | Philippians 3:8 **Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ...**
- **Application:** **Our Great Big God becomes our sufficiency by us knowing Him... He already knows us and loved us before time began.**
- **Illustration of the Three Friends trying to get to heaven:** Three young neighborhood friends were discussing this question with an older neighbor who was a Christian. He asked the young men...: **If Jesus asked why you should get into heaven, how would you answer?** The first friend said, "I have been a good person and always try to do the right thing." But that was not the right answer to their neighbor. The second friend said, "Because I went to church every week." But even that was not enough for him. Finally, the third friend told the neighbor with confidence, **"Because I have come to know Him."** The neighbor complimented the third by saying he would surely see Christ. **The remedy is found in knowing God.**

2. He desires of us to discover the glory of his love and life.

- NKJV | 1 Jn 3:1 **Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.**
- **Elmer Towns once said about God's Love:** Love is not just a virtue of God. It is God Himself; Love is not something God develops with us; God does not need to maintain His love; the love of God is as eternal as the nature of God. The love of God is self-existing.
- **Application:** Even if we ceased to exist... God would be loving. Even if we could spit in His face and curse Him... there would be no changing His love.
- It is more than something He has chosen to do. It is His filtering system... even in His judgment, He loves.
- **Illustration of the Favorite Child of Mom:** When the small daughter was once asked which child was her mother's favorite, the little girl promptly replied: "She loves Jimmy the best because he's the oldest; and she loves Johnny the best because he's the youngest; and she loves me the best because I'm the only girl!" It would be difficult to find a better illustration of God's all-embracing love for His children. It is wonderful to know that God loves us personally, no matter what our experience has been. His love transcends every barrier, and each one of us is most precious in His sight. **That is known as glorious love. The remedy is found in trusting Gods love.**

3. God would be no less God without us.

- NLT | Mal 3:6 **"I am the LORD, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed.**
- God doesn't change! That's good news! His love never changes. His promises never change. His Heart never changes. His pursuit of us never changes.

- But imagine that everything as we know it is gone... He still would be Who He is right now!!
- NLT | Jn 14:9 Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? **Seeing Jesus we see what the Father is like in eternity!!! NO GREATER LOVE!!! The remedy is found in God’s unchangingness.**

4. It is us who needs Him.

Together with Christians around the world today, we've dressed up in some measure and have come to some building someplace. We've gathered beneath tall steeples or in mildewed basements, before a radio or video screen, **not to meet any need in God, but because, despite our blinding pride, we are at least dimly aware that after all these centuries of trying to work out life on our own, some of us have discovered how much we truly need God.**

God is a BIG GOD!!! He is the remedy that we need. We need his love to change our broken relationships and fragmented politics. We need his peace to quiet our anxious minds and restless hearts. We need his wisdom to guide us through the maze of choices ahead. We need his forgiveness to lift the weight of all that has gone wrong in our character.

Transition: We can know Him... see His glory... and we can trust He will never change!!!

Drawing the Net / Challenge

This God who does not need anything from us at all has nonetheless desired to come to us in the person of Jesus to offer us everything we truly need.

He says: "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Our God can flow into all those places where you are weak. So, we must open ourselves to Him! Feed richly and drink deeply of my sufficiency, and I will give you my life.

Final Illustration of God’s Cattle: Shortly after Dallas Theological Seminary was founded in 1924, it almost came to the point of bankruptcy. All the creditors were going to foreclose at noon on a particular day. That morning they met in the president’s office for prayer that God would provide. In that prayer meeting was a man by the name of Harry Ironside. When it was his turn to pray, he said, “Lord, we know that the cattle on a thousand hills are Thine. Please sell some of them and send us the money.” While they were praying a tall Texan stepped up to the business office and said, “I just sold two carloads of cattle in Ft. Worth. I’ve been trying to make a business deal but it fell through and I feel compelled to give the money to the seminary. I don’t know if you need it or not, but here’s the check!” The secretary took the check and knowing how critical things were financially, went to the door of the prayer meeting and timidly tapped. When she finally got a response, the president took the check out of her hand. It was exactly the amount of the debt! When he looked at the name, he recognized the cattleman and turning to Dr. Ironside said, “Harry, God sold the cattle!” **(Hewett, p.419)**

This Week’s Challenge: I am calling on every Christian here in person and those online to pray for our country, our church, and for revival at every lunch. **How many will join with your church family and do this?**