

MADRID CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2017

2017 ANNUAL THEME:

PUTTING ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD



EPHESIANS 6:10-20

"PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL" (EPHESIANS 6:11).

LIVING WITH UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

BY DOY MOYER

Most of us would likely agree with the idea that the older we get, the more we realize we don't know. The vastness of the universe, the complexity of people, and the general recognition that we just don't have all the answers leads us to realize the need to be humble. We don't know everything. Now that doesn't mean we cannot know anything. It only means that we need to recognize that we are not infinite and there are limitations to what we can know.

This is a difficult world in which we live, a world that has been corrupted by sin. Sin is a problem that is brought on by the attempt of people to dethrone God and take the throne for themselves. We want to be our own rulers, and so our view of God often suffers because we suppress His nature in our thinking in order to make ourselves more important.

Yet we must recognize God to be God, in all that entails. God doesn't need our permission to be who He is, but in our hearts and minds, we must learn to calm the storms that threaten our respect for God and see that God runs this universe by His wisdom and power. "O LORD, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your possessions" (Psalms 104:24).

As Paul affirms, God is "able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). We aren't even capable of thinking all that God can do. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" (Romans 11:33).

Learning to trust God can be a difficult task for us, especially when we don't understand why things are the way they are. Why did God make us this way? Why isn't the Bible clearer on this or that topic? Why does Jesus say it that way? Why does God allow this person to suffer? On go the questions to which we often don't have the full answers. For some, this kind of problem can be something that creates a crisis in faith. How can we live with unanswered questions? How can we accept a God who doesn't tell us everything we want to know?

Jesus taught, "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all" (Mark 10:15). The key issue here is that of trust. From the time we were born, we learned to trust our parents. We didn't know anything about this world. We were entirely in the hands of our caretakers — innocent, ignorant, and with no way of knowing how to care for ourselves. Yet we trusted. We may have cried, struggled for independence, and asked, "Why?" as we were growing, but we know now that the only way to get by was through trusting those in charge. It is, in fact, only reasonable that those who know less and have fewer experiences should learn from those who know more and have experienced more.

Yet think of how much greater God is. He holds the universe in the palm of His hand. "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by the span, and calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, and weighed the mountains in a balance and the hills in a pair of scales?" (Isaiah 40:12).

We do not have all knowledge of the Holy One. We cannot gather the winds in our fists. We cannot wrap the waters in our garments (see Proverbs 30:4). So how much more should we then learn to trust that God knows what He is doing!?

So much of Scripture is devoted to the power of God, urging us to trust His wisdom. The book of Job perfectly illustrates this. When God finally spoke, they were reminded of their ignorance and of the power and wisdom of God in this creation (see Job 38ff). Job needed to learn to trust God, even when he didn't understand all the reasons for his own personal suffering.

Faith allows us to live with unanswered questions. Yes, we keep searching and learning, but our knowledge will not be filled to the brim. It may be that some answers are beyond our grasp, but the bottom line is that we are still the children who don't know how to care for ourselves. Now, we are not so innocent, but God takes care of that if we will trust Him. He has made all the arrangements. If we trust Him, we can live through the difficulties and know that it will all be worthwhile in the end (I Corinthians 15:58).

A THOUGHT ABOUT AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY

BY EDWIN CROZIER

In the New Testament, the declaration that "Jesus is Lord" was an anti-Caesar statement. That is, it was purposefully in contrast to the Roman sentiment as seen in passages like John 19:15 and Acts 17:7. I understand, of course, there was nothing in this statement that was fomenting rebellion against Caesar or even disobedience (except where Caesar contradicted Jesus). However, it was a contrasting statement. A Roman would say, "We have no king but Caesar." A disciple does not say, "Well, Jesus is my supreme king but Caesar is a close second." Rather, a disciple says, "I have no king but Jesus." Caesar needed to realize he had nothing politically to fear from King Jesus, but Caesar wouldn't realize that. Further, Philippians 3:20 reminds disciples that "our citizenship is in heaven."

Of course, I know Paul made use of the benefits provided by his Roman citizenship. However, it doesn't use his earthly citizenship seem that Paul tried to honor Rome, protect her, or claim her pre-eminence over other empires, nations, and kingdoms in the world. This leads me to wonder, "why do many American Christians believe patriotism to an earthly kingdom is a Christian duty?" Do we American Christians believe the Russians have the same duty to patriotism in their country that we have to our country? Why do we often act like the Bible teaches the common refrain: "God, family, country" when it does not?

At times, it does seem like many Christians show more devotion to the kingdoms of men and forget that they are pilgrims on this earth. Do we as “American Christians” show more pride and devotion to the physical country or even town that our tents are currently pitched? Here are some things that may show that we may be too devoted to your earthly nation:

- Do you worry or get stressed over the state of the country?
- Do you ever feel hatred or bitterness towards those who live in another country?
- Do you talk about your Heavenly King less than you do the current president?
- Do you show the same fervor in defending your King and His laws as you do the current president and the constitution/Bill of Rights?
- Do you believe someone who is in a different political party, won't stand for the national anthem, or will not “pledge allegiance” to the flag are “less Christian” or guilty of sin?
- Is your allegiance to your earthly country unconditional?

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 07/02 – Prayer Service @ 9AM
- 07/19 – Labor Day Planning Meeting @ 6PM
- 07/30 – Next Invite Sunday - *The Best Possible News: Jesus is Risen*

Men: Jason is planning to be out of town 7/16, 7/23, and 8/6 to go to a Bible Camp and to preach a Gospel Meeting. Check the preaching list to see where you are on the list so that you can be prepared to give a lesson

DAILY READING:

- **06/26** – Jeremiah 37-39; Psalm 23
- **06/27** – Jeremiah 40-44; Psalm 24
- **06/28** – Jeremiah 45-48; Psalm 25
- **06/29** – Jeremiah 49-50; Psalm 26
- **06/30** – Jeremiah 51-52; Psalm 27
- **07/01** – Lamentations 1-2; Psalm 28
- **07/02** – Lamentations 3; Psalm 29

