

HOLDING TRUTH IN TENSION

YOU CAN KNOW GOD, AND GOD IS A MYSTERY

Icebreaker: What is the one thing about the opposite sex that just baffles you, and you wish you understood?

Introduction: In the sermon introduction, Pastor Dave introduced three common problems that people have struggled with, regarding God and Church. First, God is all powerful but bad things are allowed to happen in the world. The second, is that some churches may not allow asking questions or expressing doubts. The third, is an issue of talking about doing good works, but never doing anything for others. Pastor Dave then talked about holding truths in tension. This sermon series is about conflicts we experience in truth. Two seemingly contradictory things can both be true and the result is that energy, influence, and truth can be gained, because of that conflict. God uses tension to help us understand Him in a much bigger way.

1. Please explain how two completing/contradictory truths can both be true at the same time?
2. How can we manage seemingly contradictory and competing truths? What are the advantages to keeping these truths in tension vs. favoring one over the other? How can contradictory truths be a source of energy and influence?
3. Have you ever struggled with the issue of God's sovereignty and the presence of evil in the world? What are some events that have caused you to question God's sovereignty and how did you resolve the tension or not?
4. Tell your circle about a time that you have been discouraged from asking spiritual questions or expressing doubts or struggles with God. What false beliefs do you suppose cause people to think this way? Are there questions you still struggle with today?
5. Though God has created us for good works (Ephesians 2:10), why is it we sometimes fail to begin or complete what God has for us to do? Are there things that you feel God is prompting you to do, that you have not yet acted on?
6. Pastor Dave mentioned parents who will not discuss sexuality or science with their children. How should parents approach these issues?

- **You can know God, and God is a Mystery. Read John 9:1-7.**

Jesus and the disciples walk by a man who was born blind (John 9:3-7). The disciples ask Jesus who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? The belief was that all problems are a result of sin (9:2, 34). We do not have enough knowledge to attribute problems to specific sin. Jesus tells the disciples that it happened that the works of God may be displayed in him.

7. How do we share the false views of the Pharisees and how does it relate to us today?

8. What does our partial understanding of God reveal about God's way? (Deuteronomy 29:29, Isaiah 55:8)

9. Why does He not fully reveal Himself to us? Why do you think that God wants us to struggle with understanding who He is? How should we respond to the tension?

- **With God expect the unexpected. Read John 9:8-34**

There was some disagreement about whether or not the man who was not blind, was the same person who had been blind. The man confirmed that he was the man who had been blind and now he was seeing (John 9:8-12). The religious leaders called the man a second time and told him to tell the truth. They (the religious leaders) knew that Jesus was a sinner. They asked, "How did he open your eyes?" The man born blind said, "I told you, and you did not listen, why do you want to hear it again?" The religious leaders said that they knew that God spoke to Moses, but that they did not know where Jesus came from. The man born blind pointed out that a miracle had been done and they accused Jesus of being a sinner.

10. Why did the religious leaders automatically assume that Jesus was a sinner? What was the issue that they incorrectly understood? How do we share this same incorrect understanding of God, today?

11. What did the religious leaders misunderstand about themselves and their relationship to God? How can we have a similar view of ourselves and God?

• **The song is in the tension. Read John 9:35-41**

Jesus visits the man after he is thrown out from the presence of the religious leaders. Jesus tells the man who He is, and the man worships Jesus. Jesus explains that He has come that the blind may see and the seeing may become blind. Pharisees ask, "Are we blind too?" Jesus says, "You claim to see, so your guilt remains." God uses the blindness of this man to reveal Himself to both the man and the Pharisees, but the Pharisees largely refuse to see.

12. What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "...so that the blind may see and those who see will become blind"? Can you think of ways that we are blind and when we think that we see?

From Pastor Dave's Sermon: The Pharisees couldn't reconcile that love doesn't mute the law... it amplifies it! You can know God, but God is a mystery. Some of you have put God in a theological box. If God were to work or move outside that box you created; your pride will be the greatest deterrent to giving God glory and recognizing who he is.

13. Pastor Dave made the statement that "Love doesn't mute the law, it amplifies it." What does this mean to you?

14. What limitations are you putting on God, so that you refuse to see what He is doing in your life?

Conclusion: We can know God, but there are aspects of God that we will not know, in this life. (Deut. 29:29). We make up / surmise / reason, the parts of God which we do not fully understand. We can error greatly, as to what God is like, and how He does things. One of the ways that we can know God is to struggle with questions. The religious leaders had reached incorrect conclusions that they refused to question. Consequently, they missed the Messiah, and His purpose in their/our lives. God reveals Himself in the scriptures. We can miss who God is when we do not search for Him in His word. (John 5:39, Mark 12:24, Matthew 22:29, Acts 17:11, 2 Tim 2:15)